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FRANK TOUSEY PUBLISHER, 34 & 35 NORTH MOORE STREET, N. Y.
NEW YORK, November 1, 1890.

PRICE
5 CENTS.

Vol. II

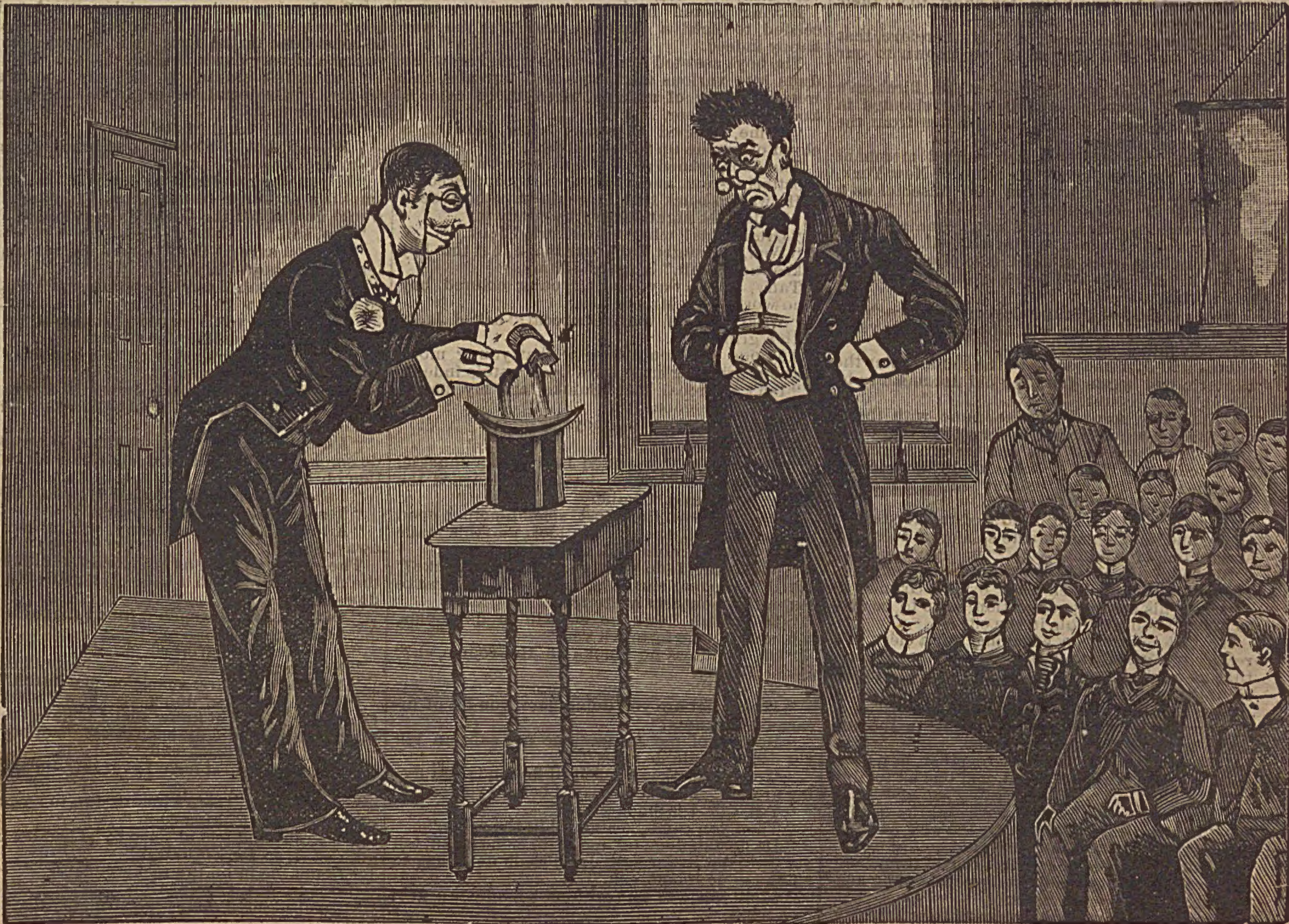
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JACK AND JIM!

OR,

Rackets and Scrapes at School.

By TOM TEASER.



"You will obsawve that these eggs aw weal," and Clarence proceeded to break a couple of them into the hat.
"Now, what is that ass going to do?" and Winder threw a savage gleam from his big spectacles upon the magician.

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JACK AND JIM;

OR,

Rackets and Scrapes at School.

By TOM TEASER,

Author of "A Bad Egg," "Mulligan's Boy," "Nip and Flip," "Jim Jams," "Corkey," "Senator Muldoon," "Muldoon Abroad," "Jimmy Grimes," "Muldoon the Solid Man," "Hildebrandt Fitzgum," "The Deacon's Son," "Skinny the Tin Peddler," "Mulcahy Twins," "Muldoon's Boarding-House," "Muldoon's Brother Dan," "Two in a Box," "Ikey; or, He Never Got Left," "Tommy Tubbs, the Pride of the School," "A Happy Pair," "The Aldermen Sweeneys of New York," "The Jolly Moke; or, Having Lots of Fun," "Our Camping Out Club," "Muldoon the Cop," "Muldoon's Grocery Store," "Mike McGuinness; or, Traveling for Pleasure," "Muldoon, the Sport," "Muldoon's Vacation," "Jimmy Grimes, Jr.," etc.

PART I.

JOHN DODSON and James Grimes, Jr., were cousins, and regular jolly jokers in the bargain. They were Jack and Jim, for short, to all their acquaintances of long standing.

The long and the short of it is, therefore, that as Jack and Jim they must be known to our readers.

Jack and Jim were pupils at Dr. Birchem's educational boarding establishment, situated in a charming rural district many miles from the bustling metropolis.

Jim was the son of a rich retired merchant living in the interior of the State of New York, and was a boy as full of fun and mischief as a dog is full of mosquitoes.

Jack was his cousin, and a good running mate, being as fond of a lark as Jim himself.

Dr. Birchem was a strict disciplinarian, and meant to have law and order in his school, if he had nothing else.

He was assisted by an able corps of teachers, the members of which will appear as this veracious narrative proceeds.

Jack and Jim had come to the school after the fall term had begun, but they did not mean to be left on that account.

By the way, some one else came with them, and this person must not be forgotten.

His full name and title was George Augustus Clarence James Fitz Roy Jones, dude and general nuisance, but he was usually called Clarence Jones for the sake of brevity.

Clarence was a young fellow of twenty-two or three, and had come to the school to pursue a special line of studies.

He was a cousin of the housekeeper at Jim's father's, and had been sent by Mr. Grimes to complete his business education so as to be able to take a good position in the city.

He had never been anything but a clerk in a retail dry-goods store, but there was a chance that he might improve on that if set going in the right direction.

Jack and Jim, with Clarence in tow, arrived at Dr. Birchem's one pleasant evening in the fall, and were assigned rooms at once.

Jack and Jim had a room together, but Clarence, being a special student, had one all to himself.

There were about forty boys in the school, most of them clever fellows, by the way, and just the sort that our two heroes would cotton to.

We don't propose to call the roll of the school, however, preferring to introduce the young gentlemen as occasion requires.

After dinner, our boys proposed to retire early, being fatigued with their long journey.

"Come into my woom, deah boy," said Clarence to Jim, "and help me to awange it."

"All right. Come along, Jack, and let's put Clarence to rights."

The first thing Clarence did after lighting up was to open his trunk, get out a gorgeous dressing-gown, a pair of embroidered slippers and a very dizzy smoking-cap of blue velvet.

Having gotten himself into these, he proceeded to light a cigarette, and then he was happy indeed.

The boys assisted him to unpack and stow his duds into various wardrobes and bureaus, and were thinking of retiring, when there came a knock at the door.

"Come," lisped Clarence, after blowing a cloud of smoke up to the ceiling.

The door opened as if it had been burst in by a battering-ram, and a young darky appeared.

He was so black that he could have been seen in the darkest night, simply by contrast.

"Great guns! what's this?" cried Jack.

"Well, I thought Taffy was black, but this boy takes the biscuit," laughed Jimmy.

Taffy, by the way, was a young colored boy who worked for Mr. Grimes.

"What do you want, Charcoal?" asked Jack, with a grin.

Any one that could look at that young moke without grinning must have been a stoic indeed.

"Isn't charcoal tall. Smoke am my name, sah," said the coon.

"Smoke?" asked both boys.

"Yes, sah, Smoke."

"Holy Smoke?" inquired Jack with a chuckle.

"No, sah, jes' Smoke, dat's all," returned the darky, with never a smile.

In fact, he was the most solemn-acting coon for one that had so comical a look, and this made the boys laugh more than ever.

"What can I do faw you, Mistah Smoke?" asked Clarence, sending the coon's namesake out of his mouth in white rings.

"De doctah 'lows no smokin' in de rooms, sah, and I come fo' to tell yer."

"Oh, he allows no smoke in the rooms, eh?" asked Jimmy.

"No, sah."

"Then what are you doing here, you bit of incarnate darkness?"

"Doctah tol' me fo' to come up, sah, an tell yer dat war agin de rules."

"Well, he smokes himself, if he sends you flying around. You are Smoke, I believe you said?"

"Yes, sah, I is Smoke, sir."

"Then you can't be allowed in the room."

"De doctah done tol' me fo' to come up an' tell yer, sah, dat it war agin de rules ob de house to smoke in de rooms, sah."

And all this was said without a smile or a grin or a wink.

Clearly, that funny-looking coon had no more appreciation of fun than a bull has of a red dress.

"Is smoking contwawy to wules?" asked Clarence, dropping the remains of his cigarette in a cuspidore.

"Yes, sah; de doctah smell um when he go by, an' tol' me fo' to come up an' tell—"

"All right," interrupted Jimmy; "you needn't say the rest."

"But I am pawsuing a special cawse of studies, don't ye know," put in Clarence, "and I cah'n't be considered in the light of a school-boy, me young and very dawk fwient."

"Dat amn't nuffin' to me, sah," answered Smoke. "De doctah tol' me fo' to come up heah an' tell yer to—"

"Come off," laughed Jimmy.

"No, sah, but to stop dat yer smokin', 'cause it am agin de—"

"If you should chance to discover our friend smoking at some future time, I suppose you would go and tell the doctor?" asked Jack.

"Yes, sah."

"Are you sure of that?" and Jack put a quarter into the boy's hand.

"Wall, no, sah, I isn't quite sure yet," returned Smoke, but with never a grin for all that.

"Oh, I know you'd forget all about it," added Jimmy, supplementing Jack's gift.

"Wall, I might member to tell him once in a while, sah," said Smoke.

"Pawhaps that would dwive it fwom yaw memoway altogethah," said Clarence, giving Smoke a dollar.

"I done fo'get all 'bout it, sah. Neber smell de smoke. Neber tell de doctah, lose all rec'lection ob it 'tirely."

"I thought you would forget it," said Jack.

"Yes, sah, don' member nuffin'."

"All right," laughed Jimmy. "You can blow away, Smoke."

The coon vanished as quickly as he had come, the door closing with a bang that made the windows rattle.

"Did you ever see such a funny moke?"

"And such a solemn one?"

"He never once grinned."

"Nor smiled."

"Nor gave the first suspiclon of a laugh."

"Vewy stwange, don't ye know," spoke up Clarence. "Do ye know that I believe the doctah nevah sent him up heah at all, deah boys."

"It's a case of blackmail," said Jim.

"And the blackest male I ever saw, too, hanged if it isn't."

"Never mind, there's lots of fun to be got out of that solemn looking coon."

"Yes, sir, and lots of sleep to be had before we get rested, so I'm off to bed."

"Count me in on the racket."

"Good-night, Clarence."

"Good-night, Jimmy; good-night, Jack, deah boy."

The boys now left Clarence to his own devices and went off to bed, wasting no time in falling asleep, although they really had lots of things to talk about.

The next morning the boys were given desks in the general school-room, and the doctor proceeded to assign them their several tasks.

Before doing this, however, he had to give them a partial examination, so as to be able to tell into what classes they would be put.

Jimmy was first called up on the doctor's platform in order to show what he knew.

Just then, however, Smoke came into the room, walked solemnly up to the desk and handed Dr. Bircham a card.

"De ge'man wish ter see yer, sah," said that sober-minded moke.

The doctor glanced at the card, arose in haste and said:

"Excuse me a moment, young gentlemen. Please go on with your studies till my return."

Then he walked out, Smoke following, and the boys were left alone.

The doctor had told them to go on with their studies, but how could they do that with a new boy in the room?

Of course they must look at him and wonder what he was like, and even to ask each other in whispers what they thought of him.

And of course all this did not escape the sharp eyes and ears of Jimmy Grimes, Jr.

He knew the boys were sizing him up, and his quick wit told him how to get into their good graces at once.

He advanced to the front of the platform, bowed, grinned and said pleasantly:

"Young gentlemen, ahem!"

He had no need to secure their attention, however, for they had been watching him for the last five minutes.

"I say, boys, how are you all?" he continued. "My name is Jimmy Grimes and my friend's is Jack Dodson. We're cousins and we take the cake for snaps and jokes."

"You can go in solid on that," said Jack from his seat.

"I'll tell you a story, if you like," said Jimmy, "so you can get an idea of what we can do."

"Go ahead," shouted George Power, one of the boys.

"Yes, that'll be first rate," added Harry Gilbert, a handsome fellow sitting near Jimmy.

"I'll tell you about our travels," Jimmy went on, and then he proceeded to speak of the trip that he and Jack had made, beginning in New York and going as far as Denver.

As Jimmy told of the fun he and Jack had had, of the pranks they had played upon Clarence, of the queer adventures of the dude, and of their many rackets, the boys grew mighty interested.

When he came to tell how Clarence had been left behind in Cincinnati, and had started to walk to St. Louis, and how he had met with some tramps, the boys laughed till the tears came.

Some of them could not laugh enough sitting down, and so they stood up and gave full play to their emotions.

The room fairly rang with laughter, and the boys thought they had never heard anything so funny.

Jimmy was a good story teller, and he put in all the necessary flourishes and gestures, which made his yarns all the more enjoyable.

As he went on the boys howled with delight, and one would have thought the school-room a theater where a funny comedy was being played.

Jimmy had made himself solid with the boys, but the doctor was yet to be propitiated.

Suddenly one of boys at the back of the room, Walter Davenport by name, called out in a hoarse whisper:

"Cheese it, Jim, here's the doctor."

The boys settled down in their seats at once, and pretended to be studying with all their might.

It was too late, however, for the doc had seen the whole business.

He stalked up the main aisle, stepped upon the platform, sat down, and turning a regular thundercloud mug toward Jimmy, said:

"Master Grimes, you have been guilty of a flagrant breach of discipline in alienating the attention of my pupils from their customary—"

"Wait a moment, sir," said Jimmy, as sober as a judge. "That's all the hard words I can stand at once. Give me time to study them up first."

The doctor looked puzzled, and then angry, but finally managed to say:

"You were telling the young gentlemen a story. Pray repeat it to me."

"Would you really like to hear it?"

"You will please repeat it, whether I like it or not," said the doctor sternly.

"All right, sir, but the boys would rather have me go on, I guess, as they have heard the first part."

"Tell me just what you told them, sir."

Now, if the doctor had expected to find that Jimmy had been telling a romance of western life or of robbers, Indians and cut-throats, he was doomed to disappointment.

Jimmy told the story of Clarence and the tramps, just as he had told it to the boys, and the doctor listened without ever showing a grin, though the boys were surreptitiously giggling, trying vainly to restrain themselves.

"Well, sir," said the doctor quietly, "the story is by no means an improbable nor an improper one, but there is a place for all things."

Jimmy was looking for a lecture, but the doctor merely said:

"If you choose to amuse your future comrades with the narrative of your travels, pray do it out of school hours. If this offense is repeated you will be severely punished. We will now proceed with your examination."

Jimmy liked the doctor already for his quiet ways, and made up his mind that, no matter how many rackets he might play while in the school, the doctor should never be a victim.

The boys went on with their studies, and gradually overcame their propensity to laugh, though they all voted Jimmy a good fellow, and made up their minds to become better acquainted.

Both Jack and Jim passed a good examination, and the doctor saw that, with their liking for fun, they had not neglected their studies, and this was a point in their favor.

During the forenoon there was a recess of half an hour, and when our boys went outside they were at once surrounded.

Power, Gilbert and Davenport introduced themselves, and then brought up their comrades to go through with the same ceremony.

"I hope we all may be good friends," said Jimmy, "and have lots of fun."

"We'll be sure to," laughed Harry; "but where is your friend Jones?"

"Clarence, you mean? Studying the rudiments of book-keeping, I suppose. You'll see him at dinner."

"Say, aren't you going to introduce me?" a voice was now heard saying.

Jimmy looked around and beheld a short, fat, yellow-headed, very much freckled boy of his own age standing near.

He was not good-looking, but he had an honest face, and Jimmy foresaw that he and the boy would have a good deal to do with each other in the future.

"This is Tommy," said Harry, with a laugh—"Tommy Wright."

"Then he can't be wrong, if he's right," laughed Jimmy.

"Everything goes wrong with him for all that," laughed Harry; "don't it, Tommy?"

"He's the unluckiest boy in the school," added George. "If there's only one bee in a field, it'll sting Tommy; if anybody gets sick it's Tommy, first of all; if the boys go off on a racket, Tommy is sure to be nabbed."

"We'll pair him off with Clarence, eh, Jack?" laughed Jimmy, "and then they can sympathize with each other."

Despite his reputation for bad luck, Jack and Jim both liked Tommy at first sight, and decided to take him up, inasmuch as many of the boys appeared to look down upon and make fun of him.

He was homely and awkward, to be sure, but was honest, generous and affectionate, for all that, and appeared to have entertained a deep regard for our heroes from the start.

For a day or so things went along smoothly, the boys gradually getting acquainted, and picking out the fellows they liked best.

One night Davenport and Gilbert came to the room occupied by our heroes and said:

"Are you off after apples to-night, boys? We know where there are some jolly ones."

"To be sure," answered Jack. "But how are you going to work it? There's no going out after hours."

"Let down a rope, my boy, and get away," laughed Harry.

"And how do you get back?"

"Have the rope lowered for you and climb up again."

"All hunky."

"Will you go, then?"

"To be sure," replied Jack and Jim.

"That's good."

"When shall we start?" asked Jack.

"We'll whistle outside your window."

This was agreed upon, and the two visitors departed.

Shortly afterward Tommy came in to see the boys, his chest being swelled to an abnormal size.

"Hallo, Fatty!" laughed Jimmy. "What have you been been eating to make you grow so much?"

Then Tommy unbosomed himself, as it were. That is, he opened his coat and a rope ladder fell to the floor.

"Made it myself," he said, proudly. "Ain't it a daisy?"

It was, indeed, as the boys found upon examination.

"Just the thing for us," said Tommy. "I don't like to trust to sheets and that sort of thing. Did once and nearly broke my neck."

"What's it for, anyhow?" asked Jack, innocently, in order to try Tommy.

"So we can get out the window, of course. You're going with Davenport and Gilbert, aren't you?"

"How did you know that?"

"Oh, I found out," laughed Tommy, "and so I brought you the ladder."

"That was kind of you."

"I then you'll let it down for us when we whistle?"

At this question Tommy looked as blank as a prison wall.

"Why! ain't I going?" he asked.

"Who's going to let the ladder down for us?"

"Can't you leave it hanging?"

"And have some of the men find it when they go the rounds?" asked Jimmy.

"So they would."

"I'll stay back," spoke up Jack, "and let Tommy go."

But Tommy would not listen to such a proposition.

"I never thought about having somebody to tend to the ladder," he muttered. "I suppose I'll have to stay behind."

"Can't you get somebody else?"

"No, not that I could trust. They'd blab."

Both Jack and Jim had already learned from the other boys that Tommy never gave his friends away when caught in a scrape.

They had to laugh at his neglect in not providing for his own return, but for all that admired his generosity in thinking of them.

Tommy himself seemed to be thinking, and once or twice they saw him brush away a tear, as if the idea of being left behind were too much for him.

Finally they heard a whistle outside, and Tommy said, hurriedly:

"Smother the light and throw up the sash and I'll fix the ladder for you."

Jack did as requested, and when Tommy had made the ladder fast at one end he lowered it.

"Come on," said Jimmy, "we'll chance it being seen by any one."

"No, no, you'll be caught if you do," said Tommy, earnestly. "Go ahead, you two, and I'll wait and watch."

They could not induce him to go along, and as Walter and Harry were growing impatient, they hurriedly descended.

"What made you delay so?" asked Davenport.

Jimmy explained, and Harry said with a laugh:

"Tommy is a brick and it's a pity he's so stupid."

Off went the party, getting out of the grounds all right, and then striking across country toward the orchard they proposed visiting.

They found a fine lot of apples and were having a jolly time with them when, all of a sudden, they heard the bark of a dog.

"Cheese it," whispered Harry. "This way, boys."

The quartette of apple samplers lost no time in getting out of that orchard, and none too soon, either.

The farmer and his dog were nearly on top of them as it was, but Harry Gilbert was a good pilot and soon had them out of danger.

Nobody cared for apples after that, however, and it was agreed that they strike for the school.

In fact, the farmer had not yet abandoned the chase, and they were obliged to strike for somewhere.

They soon distanced him, though, and, panting and sweating, they at last halted in the shadow of the walls.

"Here's our room," whispered Davenport, looking up. "Can you find yours?"

"Just around the corner," answered Jimmy.

"That's it; good-night."

In a few moments Jack and Jim stood under their window whistling for Tommy.

No faithful henchman appeared in answer to the summons, as in the old novels, however.

Then they whistled again, louder than before.

A fog horn would not have done them any good, if they had possessed one.

Tommy made no sign, and all remained dark and silent in their room.

"We ought to have got Clarence," whispered Jimmy.

"I'm afraid Tommy has gone back on us."
 "So it seems."
 Then they tried whistling again, but with the same result.
 "It's a cold night for us, Jack."
 "So I am afraid."
 Then Jimmy tried throwing pebbles up at the window.
 He hit the mark every time, but that was all he did do.
 No Tommy answered the signal, and Jimmy was disgusted.
 "He has clean gone back on us because we wouldn't take him with us."
 "Well, what are we going to do?"
 "Wake up the other fellows."
 Our young friends then returned to where they had left Davenport and Gilbert.
 Jimmy knew the window, and throw a stone against it.
 If he had thrown a rock as big as himself the result would have been the same.
 There was no more sign given than Tommy had made.
 Then Jack tried whistling.
 It was no go and all was as quiet as a church.
 "Can those fellows have gone back on us, too?" muttered Jimmy.
 "Looks like it."
 "I'll never trust 'em again."
 "This don't look like our usual luck, does it, old man?"
 "It's a cold day all around," answered Jimmy, with a grim smile.
 "What are we going to do now?"
 Jimmy thought a moment and said:
 "We wasted too much time on Tommy, and the other fellows have gone to sleep."
 "Well?"
 "We shall have to wake up Smoke and get him to let us in."
 "Where does the coon take his snooze?"
 "In the room near the kitchen."
 "Suppose he sleeps as soundly as the boys."
 "Oh, we'll wake him up."
 Then the boys proceeded to the rear of the school building till they came to a window where a dim light was burning on the ground floor.
 "That's the hall," whispered Jack.
 "And the coon's bunk is in the next room."
 The boys crept up to the window, and Jimmy rapped cautiously on the pane.
 There was no response and the signal was repeated.
 More than once, too, till our boys began to think that they had come upon the house of the seven sleepers.
 "Confound such a lot of snoozers," muttered Jack.
 Then Jimmy knocked again, louder than before.
 Suddenly, without a word of warning, the window flew up and a voice cried:
 "Who dat knockin' on de winder?"
 "Is that you, Smoke?"
 "Won't tol' yer till I knows who you is fust."
 "Jimmy Grimes."
 "And Jack Dodson."
 "Wha' yer doin' out dere dis time o' night?"
 "We've been locked out."
 "Don' yer know better dan to stay out aftah hours, young ge'men?"
 "Of course, Smokey, old boy, but let us in, and we'll tell you all about it."
 "How yer knows I see Smoke? I don't tol' yer nuffin'."
 In fact, all they could see of the coon was his white night-shirt, but they knew it was he for all that.
 "Nobody has such a sweet voice," answered Jimmy.
 "An' yer wanten get in, does yer?"
 "Certainly."
 "Got any money?"
 "Yes."
 "How much?"
 "The young sinner!" thought Jimmy. "Here's another bribe-taker!"
 "A dollar," answered Jack.
 "Dollar apiece, don't yer mean?"
 "Yes, yes!" cried Jimmy, impatiently.
 "Gib me de money now, and den I lets yer in, young ge'men."
 "Do you think I'm green?" laughed Jimmy.
 "Open the door and you'll get the money."
 "I isn't green, no mo' dan you is," chuckled the coon. "Gimme de two dollahs or down goes de winder."
 "We'll give it to you on the door-step."
 "Dat am all right!" and down went the window.
 "He's got us, Jack."
 "Where the cutaneous growth is not plentiful, my boy."
 "Have you got a dollar in your clothes?"
 "Yes," and Jack forked over.

Then the boys hurried around to the front door, which was open the least bit of a crack.
 "Pass in yer chips, ge'men, and I lets yer in," whispered Smoke.
 Jimmy tried pushing the door open, but it was no use; something held it.
 "Hurry up, I tol' yer," said Smoke. "I see cotehin' cold."
 Jimmy passed in the two coins, and in a few moments the door swung open wide enough to admit them.
 They could see nothing of Smoke, however, and so they stole cautiously up-stairs.
 When they reached the next flight they heard the door shut and the bolts fly into place.
 "That coon is pretty fly," whispered Jimmy.
 "He was afraid we would take the money away from him, and so dusted."
 "We'll have to get square on his dusky nibs."
 "Trust me for that, old fellow."
 Then the boys crept cautiously to their room, all being silent in the house, though here and there a light burned in the passages.
 Reaching their own room in safety, they struck a light.
 There, stretched out upon the bed, the end of the rope ladder clutched in his hands, lay Tommy, fast asleep.
 He had not gone back on them, but he had fallen asleep on his post and was now snoring like an elephant.
 "No wonder he heard nothing with all that noise."
 "Well, if ever I trust him again call me a duffer."
 Poor Tommy! he did not know what was coming.

PART II.

TOMMY lay snoring on the bed, and Jack and Jim stood looking at him.
 "Let's give him a lesson."
 "And a sharp one."
 Then Jimmy took off his coat and vest, loosened his suspenders, and knotted them.
 He next proceeded to apply them vigorously to Tommy's hind quarters.
 At the first crack Tommy gave a grunt.
 At the second he kicked out like a vicious mule, and snorted.
 A third and fourth stinger fetched him out of his slumbers with a start, and the three or four that followed brought him to his feet on the floor in the middle of the room.
 "Stop that, it hurts," he blubbered, rubbing his legs.
 "You're a pretty fellow, ain't you?" asked Jimmy.
 "What for?" stammered Tommy.
 "Sleeping on your post and nearly getting us robbed."
 "Didn't sleep on any post at all. How could I? It wouldn't hold me."
 "You slept on your watch, then," observed Jack.
 "Couldn't sleep on a watch—'tain't big enough. Haven't got any watch, anyhow," sobbed Tommy.
 Jack and Jim both laughed at this, and Tommy suddenly looked up and said:
 "How did you get in, when the rope ladder is up here?"
 "Came up by the stairs. Smoke let us in."
 "Why, then I must have fallen asleep!"
 This was said in the soberest manner, as if it were a strange discovery he had just made.
 Both boys laughed, Tommy's expression was so earnest, and Jimmy said:
 "You just did, Tommy, and we had a fine old time getting in."
 "Why, now, that's too bad," replied the young owl.
 "But did you bring any apples?"
 "No; so go off to bed."
 "If you'd had me you'd got some," said Tommy, solemnly.
 "Yes, and got caught in the bargain."
 Tommy then went away to his own room and the boys to bed, and all was as quiet as a church when voluntary subscriptions are called for.
 The next day Jack and Jim got down to their work, and in the course of the morning met Mr. Winder.
 This gentleman was Dr. Bircham's principal assistant, and had a room to himself where the boys went to recite certain lessons.
 Mr. Winder was tall, gaunt and cadaverous, with a big nose, long chin and a bald head fringed with black, stubby hair.
 He wore a pair of big black-rimmed eye-glasses which were always tumbling off, and which, when on, made him look like a bilious owl.
 He took snuff, which he kept in a box in his desk, and used a faded yellow silk handkerchief, which always looked dirty and generally hung out of his coat-tail pocket, half way to the ground.
 He was as cross-grained and tough as a hickory stump—no well-regulated boy in the school could endure him.
 "New to the school, eh?" he snapped, when Jack and Jim appeared.
 "Yes, sir."
 "H'm! Well, you want to behave yourselves when you're in my room and learn your lessons; for such as don't I have a prime remedy."
 Then he chuckled and tapped a long rattan which lay across his desk.

"You're just the sort of fellow I like—to play snaps on," thought Jimmy.
 "If we don't have some fun with you before we're much older, then our names are not Jack and Jim," mused the other young gentleman.
 During the recitation Jack made a slight mistake, which he at once corrected.
 For all that, however, the amiable Mr. Winder gave him a couple of cracks across the hand to make him remember.
 Jimmy dropped a book by accident, and he, too, got a dose, to teach him to be more careful.
 In fact, nearly all the boys received some evidence of the tender regard Mr. Winder had for them, some more than others.
 "I'll fix you, my lad," muttered Jim, as the boys left the room.
 At the noon recess he and Jack consulted with Power, Gilbert and Davenport as to what was the best way of getting even with the petty tyrant.
 "Leave it to me," laughed Jimmy, after several plans had been proposed and rejected.
 This was agreed upon, and after dinner the boys had another madinée with Winder.
 Tommy was in the batch of victims this time, along with a dozen others, including our heroes and their three principal chums.
 Of course Tommy came in for his share of the fun, and was made to stand on a stool with a long white dunce cap stuck on his head, reading a book turned upside down.
 Now Mr. Winder had been up very late the night before attending a meeting of the missionary society or some other collection of old fossils, held in town.
 Besides that he had eaten a very heavy dinner, and it was not long before he began to grow very drowsy.
 He tried to arouse himself by thrashing half a dozen boys in turn for trivial offenses, but even this did not answer.
 "Class is dismissed," he finally grunted, settling down in his chair and pushing his spectacles up on his forehead.
 The boys started to leave the room, and of course Tommy supposed he could go with the rest.
 "Stay where you are," muttered that crank at the desk. "You've got to be made an example of."
 Tommy began to whimper, and some of the boys giggled.
 "Stay where you are, all of you," muttered Winder. "I'll keep you here all night, if it's necessary, to enforce respect."
 So the boys all resumed their seats, waiting patiently for leave to go.
 Winder, however, let his arms hang listlessly at his side, and was soon fast asleep.
 Ten minutes passed in silence, and then Jimmy arose cautiously, walked stealthily over to where Tommy stood on his stool of repentance, and took off his white cap.
 This he carried to his own seat and fooled with it for awhile in connection with a stub pen and some ink.
 Then, with a big grin on his face, he walked noiselessly onto the platform where Winder sat, still asleep.
 With the utmost dexterity he stuck the cap on top of Winder's head and made off as silently as he had come.
 The boys wanted to giggle, but Jimmy put his finger on his lips and motioned for them to get away as quietly as possible.
 Now that fool's cap had marked upon it, in heavy black characters, the words running from top to bottom, this legend:
 AIN'T I A DAISY?
 "I should say so," whispered Jack.
 "Ought to have his picture taken."
 "Looks handsome enough to be crubbed."
 Then the boys stole out of the room, Jimmy beckoning to Tommy to come with the rest.
 It was not possible for that unlucky youth to do anything right, and he had to drop all his books and a heavy slate while looking back at Winder, and so stumbling against a desk.
 The boys scattered in an instant, leaving Tommy alone in the room with the snoozing Adonis.
 Tommy was nearly scared out of his wits, but he managed to pick up his books and slate after awhile and then hurried from the room, finding the boys waiting for him in the hall outside.
 "You stupid donkey, you nearly upset the whole business," cried Jimmy.
 "So I did, but I picked it up again all right," stammered the other.
 "Did Winder awake?"
 "No, he's wound up yet."
 "Good thing he is."
 Then the boys marched back to Dr. Bircham's room in a body, as if they had come from recitation.
 And there, in the deserted school-room, sat the unpopular instructor, his head thrown back and surmounted by a big fool's cap, the while his snoring kept time with the big clock on the wall.
 At three o'clock lessons were over, and the boys all went out upon the play-ground to have a game of foot-ball.
 Those who knew about the racket on Winder said nothing to those who did not, and of course no one went into the room now.
 At least no ordinary boy would, but Tommy Wright could not resist the temptation of getting another glimpse at the comical sight of Winder wearing a fool's cap.
 Tommy was a queer mixture of shrewdness and stupidity, and there was never any telling what he might do.
 He therefore stole back to the room where Winder was and took another peep at the show.

"Ain't that boss?" he chuckled, advancing toward the middle of the room. "That's a daisy racket, and no mistake. Won't he be tearing mad, though, when he finds it out?"

Then Tommy stood and enjoyed the sight, making comments from time to time aloud, and thinking of nothing else.

"So you enjoy it, do you, Master Wright?" a voice suddenly asked, close behind him.

Tommy jumped as if kicked, and turned around to see who the intruder was.

It was the doctor.

Poor Tommy felt as if he had no business there at all, and ought to be a thousand miles away instead.

"Is this your work?" asked the doctor, pointing to the sleeping beauty at the desk.

"N—no, sir," cried Tommy.

"Has any one besides yourself been in this room this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir," answered Tommy, scared out of his wits.

"Who were they?"

"I don't know, sir."

The doctor looked puzzled as well as indignant.

"Not know?" he said, sternly.

"No, sir."

"You must know. I insist upon knowing who has been here this afternoon."

But Tommy stuck to his denial until he could think of something else to say.

"Don't tell me, sir, that you did not know your own schoolmates," cried the doctor. "Which ones have been here?"

"I couldn't recognize them," blurted out Tommy.

"It was too dark to see their faces."

The doctor was more indignant than ever at this declaration.

The sun had been shining brilliantly all the afternoon, and this room in particular always had a blaze of light in it.

The doctor strode up to the desk, seized Winder's rattan, yanked Tommy over a desk and proceeded to warm his rear extension most vigorously.

"Who was it—will you tell me now?" he demanded.

But Tommy would not split on his friends, and no amount of rattaning could make him.

He might have been less stupid, however, and escaped a thrashing.

In that case, he would not have been Tommy Wright.

He might have declined to say who had been there and stand upon an ancient custom and tradition.

The doctor would have respected his wish not to betray his comrades, but he could not pardon a falsehood.

Poor Tommy had invented the first story that came into his head, and, of course, it was one that would not hold water.

"Who were the boys that played this trick?" demanded the doctor, still making things warm for Tommy.

"I don't want to tell!" yelled Tommy, squirming out from under the doctor's hand and falling all in a heap on the floor.

The noise awakened Winder, and he hopped up so suddenly and drew in his feet so quickly that the fool's cap tumbled off.

Tommy lost no time in getting out of the room, and the doctor said to Mr. Winder:

"You have been asleep?"

"Yes; I was up late. I dismissed the boys somewhat early."

"And some one adorned you with a dunce cap."

"Then it was Wright, for I made him wear one. He shall be punished for this."

"I do not think it was Wright, and he has been punished sufficiently. Please do not use a dunce cap again, sir. This is not a primary school."

With this rebuke to the tyrannical tutor, the doctor took his departure, leaving Winder thinking who could have played the joke on him.

He could not guess, of course, and so made up his mind to give all the boys extra doses the next day.

Clarence, the young man mentioned as having come with Jack and Jim, had a special tutor of his own, and saw but little of the boys during school hours.

The following day, however, his tutor was taken very sick and sent word to Clarence to report to the doctor for that day.

Clarence, his book under his arm, and dressed in faultless style, was on his way to the doctor's, when he met Jack and Jim and some others going to Mr. Winder's room.

"Hallo, Clarence, where are you going?" asked Jimmy.

"To my leetchaws," for that dude would not call them recitations.

"This is the way, then. Come on," and the boys carried Clarence off to Winder's room.

"What are you doing here?" demanded the teacher, when Clarence had taken a seat.

"My wegulah pfofessah is ill, don't ye know, and I have come heah to weclte."

"Give me your book."

Clarence arose, handed his book to Winder, and was about to sit down again, when the man said:

"Remain where you are. What is the cube root of seventeen hundred and twenty-eight?"

"Weally, sah, I could not tell without a pencil."

"You ought to know it."

"But I don't, me deah sir," answered Clarence, with the blandest of smiles.

"Hold out your hand."

"What faw?"

"I want to see it."

Now Clarence was very proud of his hands, which were as white and as dainty as a lady's.

He therefore held out his right hand for Mr. Win-

der's inspection, and at once got a crack across the knuckles.

This was more than that dude had expected, or would stand.

The boys had wondered whether Winder would dare strike a fellow as big as Clarence, and that crack astonished them.

What came out in the next edition astonished them still more.

Clarence was a bit of a boxer, and no sooner did he feel that cut on his right hand than he let fly with his left.

Dainty as it was, that hand when doubled into a fist had a regular fit of sickness in it.

It caught Winder smack in the nose and drew blood the first shot.

The angry teacher sprang to his feet and went for Clarence, who had already started to meet him by the express.

Clarence got in a clipper with his right on the rattan twirler's cheek, and followed it up with one under the jaw that floored him.

The boys fairly howled with delight at their tyrant's discomfiture, and Jack and Jim declared that Clarence was getting on splendidly.

"If ye think I'm a boy to be wattanened by any wed-nosed ignowamus like you," remarked Clarence, "yaw vewy much mistaken, saw."

"Am Mis'tah Jones in dis yer room?" asked a voice at the door.

Clarence turned around, and beheld Smoke, the little coon, in the doorway.

"Yas, I am heah," said Clarence.

"Well, sah, de doctoh he wanteh know why yer don' come to de lecter. He sent me fo' to ax—"

"Aw, I'll be theah diwectly. Theah has been a mistake heah," and Clarence gathered up his books and balance sheets and started for the door.

Mr. Winder had picked himself up by this time, and held his dirty yellow handkerchief to his nose.

"I will report you, sir!" he cried to the dude.

"Wepawt and be smothawed!" answered Clarence.

"You insulted me, saw, and I wesented it. Make the most of that. Ta-ta, deah boy. See yaw latah."

Then Clarence went out, and Winder proceeded to make it cozy for the boys, the cracks that Clarence had given him putting him in just the right temper for it.

Nobody escaped, and Jimmy got an extra dose, which only served, however, to sharpen his wits so that he might get solid for the whackings he had taken.

In the afternoon, however, when school was out, Jack and Jim went off for a swim, the weather having turned warm.

The swimming-place was on the bank of a river not far from the school. In fact, in sight of the towers.

Near by were a few private bathing-houses, though the boys seldom used these, preferring to dress on the bank.

At one time, long back in the history of the school, there had been boat races on the river, though these had been discontinued.

On the bank was a little old cannon, mounted on a dilapidated carriage and half grown over with weeds.

This old soldier had formerly been used for firing the signal for the boats to start, but none of the boys then in the school had ever known it to do duty.

The boys had seen the cannon before, but at this time it seemed to give Jimmy a new idea.

"I say, Jack," he remarked, "how would it do to load this little fellow up and fire him off?"

"First rate, my boy, but is it clear?"

"We'll soon find that out," and Jimmy rammed a twig down the vent.

"That won't do; get a wire," remarked Jack.

Off went the boys to the village and bought some long copper wire and a pound of gunpowder.

Stowing the powder in a safe place, the two jokers got to work on the gun to clear out the vent.

This took some time, and when it was finished the inside was still choked with rust and dirt.

The next day, however, they got some oil and rags and an old knife, and put the juvenile thunderer into pretty good shape.

That was at noon, and after school was out they loaded her up to the muzzle with the powder and a lot of small stones.

Then they put a slow match on the vent, lighted it and went into the water to await developments.

"She points down the river," said Jack, "and if we go up we'll be all right."

"How long will the fuse burn?"

"About five minutes."

Then the boys went swimming about, now diving and going under water some distance, and then diving from the opposite bank.

"It's more than five minutes," said Jimmy, as he and Jack came swimming down the river.

"I can see it smoking yet, so it hasn't gone out."

"It'll make a jolly noise, won't it, when she goes off?"

"Yes, and scare the boys. It's funny none of them have been down."

"They said it was too cold."

"But it's funny Tommy didn't show up. He wants to follow us everywhere."

"He didn't blow on any of us for that dunce cap racket, did he?"

"Not he, and the doc seems to have dropped it."

"As well as the pounding Clarence gave Winder."

"Guess he thought it served the beggar right."

Now, while the boys had been up the river the doctor's assistant had come along, and, without noticing the boys' clothes, began to make preparations for a bath.

He had brought towels and a bathing-suit with him,

and entered one of the bathing-houses, buttoning the door on the inside.

Suddenly he heard the boys talking outside, and suspended his operations to listen.

He was a sly old dog, was Winder, and when he heard his own name spoken in anything but complimentary terms he chuckled.

"Won't I give those jokers a warming to-morrow," he muttered.

Suddenly Jimmy, who was watching the fuse, sang out:

"There she goes, Jack! Duck under!"

The little howitzer was about to speak.

Just as the flames reached the charge, the gun was slewed right around with the force, and the contents were fired toward the land instead of over the water.

Bang!

That rusty old cannon made as much noise as a dozen, and blazed away at the bathing-houses.

Fortunately the carriage broke, and the muzzle of the piece was inclined quite a little.

When that cannon shot its mouth off it unroofed the bathing-house in which Winder was getting ready for his bath.

The air was full of smoke, flying stones and timbers, and in the midst of all the racket out flew Winder from the bathing-house.

He was clad only in terror and a flannel shirt, and seemed scared out of his wits.

"Fire! murder! thieves!" he yelled, and then, tripping over the fallen cannon, he went plump into the river, clear over his head.

"Sudden appearance of the fiend, red-fire, tableau!" laughed Jimmy.

"Good chance to have revenge, and duck the sinner," chuckled Jack. "What do you say?"

"Not till I wear a tin jacket, my boy. A rattan can be felt through cloth."

PART III.

NOBODY in the school knew who had fired the cannon that kicked up such a rumpus among the bathing houses.

When Winder had emerged from the river he had lost his glasses, and though he could see two boys running up the bank, could not identify them.

Those same two boys, being our friends Jack and Jim, had scampered with their clothes, being suddenly taken with a modest turn and objecting to dressing in the presence of one of the masters.

Consequently, Mr. Winder had nothing by which he might know the malefactors.

A lot of boys and house-servants came running down to see what the fuss was, and this was another on Winder.

Not caring to be seen by all the boys of the school in the picturesque but somewhat scanty costume of a shirt, and nothing else, he bolted into one of the bath houses.

Of course it was just his luck to enter a different one from that he had originally occupied.

In his haste, and without his glasses, he did not observe the mistake until too late.

The roof was off his original bath-house, and the boys could have invaded his retreat, but then, his garments were there.

In this one they were not, and there he was, penned in, forced to wait till the boys had departed.

And this they were of course in no hurry to do.

They had to inspect the cannon, the damaged bath-house, and the shore, and talk about the explosion before they left.

Minutes seemed like hours, and the poor tutor dared not tell the boys to go away for fear they would stay the longer.

And that is just what they did do, knowing that Winder was waiting for them to obsquatulate.

He shivered and shook and sneezed, and still they hung around.

He grew purple and green and blue, and his teeth played a regular tune with their chattering.

Still those boys clung to that spot like the perfume of stale tobacco smoke in your best lace curtains.

Jack and Jim had something to do with this, as they had with every bit of mischief.

They had hurriedly dressed and joined the boys on the bank without being noticed.

Then they put those innocent kids up to keeping Winder a captive in the bath house.

They talked and laughed, and they skylarked, and even had the assistant shouted, he would not have been heard.

At last Jimmy gave them the wink to get out, it being almost time for the tea bell to ring.

"That's one on his nibs," laughed Jim, pointing to a figure standing near the bath houses.

The figure, by the way, was made up of sticks and other rubbish, dressed in Winder's clothes, and propped up in a manner to make it look most natural at a distance.

When the boys had gone the pedagogue peeped out through the little hole in the bath house door.

He saw the figure standing near and took it for one of the boys.

He could see no others, however, and the boys' voices were dying away in the distance.

They had left a sentinel, however, and that made poor Winder as mad as a hornet.

"Go away, boy," he cried to the dummy.

The latter maintained a dignified silence.

"Go away at once or I will report you for punishment."

But the solitary sentinel did not seem to care whether he was reported or not.

Finally the tinkling of the tea bell was heard in the distance, and Winder knew he ought to be in the dining-room to keep order among the boys.

He determined to come up and make an example of the young wretch on guard.

He dashed out suddenly and fell upon the culprit with tooth and nail.

The dummy collapsed in the twinkling of an eyebrow.

Then Winder saw the base deception that had been practiced upon him, and was very wroth.

He was mad enough to lick the whole school, and that's just what it spelled.

He undressed the dummy and dressed himself, stumbled upon his eye-glasses in the dirt, and hurried off post-haste to the school.

When he arrived there the doctor chided him for not being in his place when the bell rang.

Winder was not built to stand a rebuke before the whole school, but this time he had to take it like a juvenile sheep.

To explain matters would be only to subject himself to further ridicule, and he had already had a full dose of that sort of medicine.

He swallowed his temper with his tea, bolted his bravado with his bread and butter, and choked down his pride with his preserves, therefore, and so made the best of it.

But if he hadn't registered a vow to settle with the boys for that little picnic he would not have been the man he was.

He could not fasten the thing on any one, or even half a dozen boys, however, and he dared not blame the whole forty for it, lest he should make himself ridiculous.

"Won't I warm Grimes and Dodson and their set for it, though?" he thought to himself. "They're sure to have had something to do with it, and I'll tickle 'em for it—see if I don't."

The resin market must have gone away up the next day, if the quantities the boys bought to toughen their hands was any indication of the demand for that commodity.

That afternoon when lessons were over, Jack and Jim started off for a walk to the village, where they wished to make some purchases.

They had scarcely gotten clear of the grounds when Tommy came hurrying after them.

"Where are you boys going?" he asked, panting like a tired dog.

"To the village," was the answer, short and sharp, like a bent pin.

"Take me with you?"

"Do you mean for us to carry you?" asked Jack.

"No; I can walk," said Tommy, innocently.

"Then walk away from us as fast as you know how."

"It's no fun going alone."

"Let him come, Jack," said Jimmy. "What's the harm?"

"Nothing, except that he's such a Jonah."

"Well, we're not off for a lark now, and so he can't get us into any trouble."

"Did I ever do it?" asked Tommy, in such an aggrieved tone that both boys laughed aloud.

"You may not have meant to, Tommy, but that wasn't your fault."

"Well, come along, old man, but for goodness' sake keep quiet."

Tommy was glad enough to go along on any terms, and he never once opened his mouth till they got to the village.

There are more means of getting into difficulty than through the mouth, however, and Jack and Jim presently found this out.

Our boys made what purchases they wished, and left Tommy in the store looking at some mouse-traps which would not kill the little creatures they ensnared.

Tommy was a great fellow for pets, and had three or four trained mice that he kept surreptitiously in his desk and fed on scraps taken from the table.

"What fairy-like music is that?" asked Jim, as he and Jack went outside.

It was the seductive warbling of a hand-organ, played by a swarthy and very dirty Italian.

He was located a few yards down the street, and was accompanied by his wife and family.

The family consisted of a monkey and a trained poodle, and it was an open question which of the lot showed the most intelligence.

"Let's see the show," said Jack, and he and Jim strolled along and stood in front of the organ, not for the sake of hearing the music, but on the watch for a snap.

The snap came quicker than they expected, and from a different quarter.

Tommy's eye had been appropriated by the latest improvement in bean-shooters, and he had purchased one after the boys had left.

He now came out with his acquisition, and also a lot of ammunition in the shape of buckshot of the utmost muscular development.

He saw the two boys standing together a little way down the street, and at once determined to try the power of his catapult.

Fitting a load of shot in the sling, he let drive straight at Jimmy's neck.

He wouldn't have been Tommy Wright if he had hit the mark aimed at, and he didn't.

Instead of that he struck the luckless Darwinian right in the flank as he was in the act of catching a penny in a tin cup.

The monk gave a howl, let the cup fly out into the road, and at once began to claw the poodle with all his might.

The poodle got his back up at this, and bit the monk's tail till it cracked.

The Italian, thinking that Jack and Jim had hurt the monkey, raised his stick and gave Jack a belt in the ribs.

Jimmy at once flew to the rescue and banged the Tuscan's hat over his eyes in a twinkling.

The organist laid about him with his stick, and dropped his overgrown music-box so as to have a better show.

Tommy saw that his friends were in trouble and he at once joined in the scuffle, and, seeing no other convenient victim, began pelting the dog and monkey with handfuls of shot.

Some of the pellets took the grinder in the chin and made him jump back out of the way.

The boys did not care to get within reach of his stick, and were about to retreat when that brilliant Tommy must needs try a new move.

This was no less than the capture of the man's hand-organ, which he picked up and made off with.

Of course the weight was too much for him, and he let the whole business drop on the sidewalk, bottom up.

The monkey chattered, the poodle howled, and the Italian jabbered out scurrilous Italian by the yard.

"'Merican boy steal a org', policia, watchaman," he finally yelled.

"Come away, you idiot," cried Jimmy, for Tommy was trying to collar the organ again.

"What in thunder do you want of that?" laughed Jack, dragging Tommy away.

"To put in my museum of antiquities," said Tommy, gravely. "I'd like the monkey, too, but I couldn't keep him in my desk very well, and I haven't a cage yet."

"You donkey, we'll want a cage for you instead," laughed Jimmy, and then he and Jack hustled Tommy away.

The Italian recovered his organ, his menagerie, and his coppers, and so did not care to continue the fight, and the boys got away in safety.

They had been seen by one of the masters, however, and were reported to Doctor Bircham for having annoyed and engaged in a street fight with a common and disreputable organ-grinder.

They did not return directly to the school, and so the news reached there ahead of them.

"What started the fuss, anyhow?" asked Jack, when they were out of harm's way.

"Tommy, of course," laughed Jim, in reply.

"Why, you see, I was going to give you a shot in the neck," he explained, "and instead of doing that I hit the monkey."

"Well, aim at something else the next time, and you'll be sure to hit me," laughed Jimmy.

"Tommy, my son," added Jack, "we really can't let you go out without your nurse, for you're sure to get into mischief if you do."

"Why, I only meant to have a little fun," whimpered Tommy.

"And we got it on our plates, with lots of sauce thrown in," laughed Jack. "Thomas, you're a Jonah, and that's the way it reads."

"Oh, we're all right now," put in Jim, "so let's forgive him this time."

When the trio reached the school building, however, they met Smoke, who said solemnly, and with never a grin nor a wink:

"Young ge'men, follah me, ef yer please. De doctah tol' me fo' to ax yer to come an' see him."

"What for?" asked Jack.

"Don' know, sah. Dis way, if yer please, young ge'men."

Then that small sample of darkness led the way upstairs, along a passage, up a short flight and around a corner, till he came to a small room with one window in it, in the rear of the house.

"Walk in, sah, an' wait fer de doctah," he then said, as he opened the door.

The three boys entered, and Smoke at once closed and locked the door upon them, his retreating footsteps being heard in the passage outside.

The room was utterly bare of furniture, and was not more than ten feet square at the most, being provided with a single window, as already stated.

"What does this mean?" asked Jim.

"It means a lecture and perhaps a licking besides," replied Jack.

"How so, my cheerful friend?"

"Because we took Tommy along, that's so."

"I don't catch on."

"Oh, I suppose somebody saw and has reported us to the doc for fighting in the village street."

"But that beggarly Italian attacked us, and what else could we do?"

"I say, you fellows ain't going to get licked for me," declared Tommy stoutly. "I'll tell the doc I got up the whole business, and take all the licking myself."

"You mean well, Thomas," said Jack with a smile, "but you don't know us when you think we're going to let you take more than your share of any licking that may be flying around loose."

"Of course you won't," added Jim.

"Oh, I'd just as lief," said honest Tommy. "I've had lots of 'em, you know, and have got toughened, while you fellows—"

"If you say any more I'll pitch you out of the window," said Jack.

"Suppose we see what's out there, anyway?" cried Jimmy, going to the window and throwing up the sash.

Just below was a sloping roof, and a little to the right of that another, something lower.

"I say, Jack, there's no use of our staying here," said Jim, "when we can get down and into the playground in a few minutes."

"Do you think we can?" asked Jack, looking out.

"Cert, with a little management."

"But can we get back again?"

"Easy enough. You ought to know the location of the buildings by this time."

"Then let's mosey and have a good time till the doctor is ready to see us."

"That's my tune."

Then the boys got out of the window and stood on the roof below, their faces coming just above the sill.

"What am I going to do?" asked Tommy.

"Ah, there! stay there!" answered Jack.

"Can't I go with you?"

"Stay and keep watch, and give us the tip if any one comes," replied Jimmy.

"All right," said Tommy, for, having once got the boys in trouble, he was ready now to shield them from any further mishap.

Tommy meant well enough, as Jack had said, but he had not been born with a silver soup ladle in his mouth—it was much too big for a spoon, which he could have swallowed easily—and his ill luck was always following him up.

He shut down the window after the boys had departed, the latter presently joining their companions on the playground, and having a good half hour of sport.

Finally they tore themselves away, and returned to their dungeon cell, as it were.

Just as their heads came on a level with the window what should they see but the doctor with Tommy across his knee while, with his open palm, he was half-soling the seat of the luckless boy's pants in most vigorous style.

In order to lead up to this very interesting climax let us go back a little.

Tommy, left alone, was amusing himself catching flies, and noted not that the time flew till the key turned in the lock, the door opened, and in walked the doctor.

That stately personage looked around him, saw only one boy where there should be three, and asked:

"Where are Grimes and Dodson?"

"Don't know, sir," said Tommy, promptly.

He wasn't going to split on his comrades if he knew himself.

"Don't know!" echoed the doctor. "Do you mean to tell me that three boys can be locked in a room of this size and two of them disappear without the third knowing where they have gone?"

"No, sir," said Tommy, confusedly.

"Where have they gone, sir?"

"Don't know, sir," blubbered Tommy.

The doctor, greatly incensed, caught that hapless youth by the collar, yanked him across his knee, and laid on the licks with no gentle hand.

"Now, sir, where have they gone?" he demanded.

"Where have they gone?" repeated Tommy, in order to gain time.

"Yes."

Suddenly a bright idea shot into that boy's brain.

He would not tell upon his chums, of course, but he would lead the doctor off the scent.

"Where have they gone, I say?" repeated the doctor, sternly.

"Up the chimney!" cried Tommy, letting out that big idea of his.

There was one slight obstacle to this version of the affair being credited, however.

These was no fire-place in the room.

The doctor could stand anything but lying, and he at once grabbed Tommy and proceeded to warm him most effectively.

Poor Tommy's luck was turning out as usual, and his brilliant idea failed utterly of its purpose.

Just as the doctor was getting in the big licks along came Jack and Jim, and were, of course, spotted.

The doctor dropped Tommy on the floor, and raising the window, said sternly:

"Well, young gentlemen, you have returned, I see. Pray come in and make yourselves at home."

Two more crestfallen boys than Jack and Jim were at that moment could hardly have been found in a day's march.

They clambered in, and the doctor said quietly:

"Since you cannot go to the village without fighting, please confine yourselves to the school grounds for a month."

That was too much for Tommy, and he up like a little man and gave away the whole business, laying all the blame on himself.

"I will give my decision later," said the doctor, upon this. "Meanwhile, you may stay here till I send for you."

The little affair finally ended in the three boys being restricted to the school bounds for a week, other punishment being dispensed with.

Time now passed rapidly, and at last cold weather came and with it an abundant fall of snow.

This made the boys happy, as the snow came on a Saturday and they could take advantage of it.

Jack, Jim, Tommy, Will, Harry, George and a lot others were down in the village amusing themselves snowballing each other, when Jim said suddenly:

"I say, boys, here's the dude coming around the corner. Let's have some fun with him."

On the corner in question was a large manston with a high wall around it, fronting on both streets and having a gate opening on one of them.

Along this street came Clarence, gotten up regardless in a fur-trimmed ulster, sealskin cap, big beaver gloves, a big stick, and the inevitable single eyeglass.

He had evidently not seen the boys, and they now all ranged themselves along the wall, just around the corner, waiting for his approach.

There were a dozen or more of them, and each had an armful of snow-balls ready to pelt him with the moment he turned the corner.

Jimmy peeped around the corner of the wall, dodged back and said:

"He's coming on all right. The minute he turns let him have it."

"Ay, ay!" whispered all hands, and each boy grabbed a snow-ball, ready to let it fly when the time came.

Poor Clarence!
Would his usual luck attend him, or would some kind fortune save him from a cruel fate?
Wait and see.

PART IV.

A SCORE of boys stood waiting close against the wall, just around the corner, for the approach of Clarence.

Each one and every one had a snow-ball in his hand and more in reserve, ready to pelt that dude the minute he turned the corner.

He must do so, for in that direction lay the school, and he could not be going elsewhere.

Suddenly a quick step is heard, and the boys prepare for action.

Stop a bit.

This time Clarence escaped the fate in store.

When he was within twenty paces of the corner the gate in the stone wall opened and out stepped Smoke as brisk as a schoolma'am.

He had been sent on an errand by the doctor to the big mansion inside that high stone wall, and he was now returning to the school.

He had a covered basket on his arm and looked as important as a drum major.

He saw Clarence, of course, but felt too high up to speak to him.

Bang went the gate and crunch-crunch went Smoke's feet on the crisp snow.

The boys heard the step and braced themselves for the grand assault.

Clarence was the last person Jimmy had seen, and so Clarence was expected and no one else.

That little little darky turned the corner sharply and—

Bif!

Whack!

Spat!

Squash!

Thud!

The minute he appeared a volley of snow pellets met him.

It took his breath away and made his kinky hair straighten right out.

Then a second and third followed the first, and poor Smoke went down like a brick wall struck by a mule's hind feet.

His basket flew one way and his hat went another, and he sat down so suddenly that it was a wonder his teeth did not fly out.

Talk about the concussion when that young moke struck the walk.

If there had been a can of dynamite within ten feet of him it would have gone off spontaneously.

When he sat down he got another shower of snow-balls, and then all hands dusted.

When they had entirely disappeared, along came Clarence.

As he turned the corner he saw Smoke sitting on the walk plastered with snow, and trying to dig out his ears.

"Faw Heaven's sake, what's this?" cried the dude.

Then he stuck his glass in his eye, and bent over to examine the object in front of him more closely.

"Fo' goodness sake, hab de roof done fell on me or what?" gasped Smoke.

"Aw, bless my hawt, it's the little niggah," observed Clarence.

Then Smoke staggered to his feet, shook the snow from him, and asked:

"Tol' me true, boss, who is I?"

"Why, you aw Smoke, to be shuah, Doctaw Birch-em's juvenile Ethiopian wiggid out like a tighah."

"Did yer sawn de land slide, boss?"

"I do not compwehend."

"Didn't nuffin' break loose jist afo' yer come roun' de corner?"

"No, sah."

"Nuffin' done busted, de wall didn't fall down, nor nuffin'?"

"I am not awaw that any unusual convulsions of nachaw took place, my young colawed fwend."

"Suffin' done busted, I tol' yer, else I wouldn't er slipped up like dat."

"I weally couldn't infawm you," remarked Clarence.

Poor Smoke had felt mighty fine a few minutes before in his blue coat and big buttons, top boots, buckskin unmentionables and high hat.

Now he felt as mean as a man who has been run over by a swill cart.

"Don' see what it wanten snow so hard fur, jes' 'cause I'se out," he remarked, very much disgusted.

Meanwhile Clarence had gone along as chipper as a dicky bird on a twig.

Just around the next corner he met Jack and Jim, looking as innocent as two sugar cupids.

The boys expected to see him all broken up, but instead of that not a hair had been turned.

This rather amazed those two gristleless youths.

"Ah, deah boys, how de do?" said the dude, with a sweet smile. "Taking the atah this mawning? Vewy invigowating, baw Jove, isn't it?"

Of course Jimmy was too fly to ask Clarence how he managed to get spruced up so quick, but he was dying to know, all the same.

Jack, too, would have given all his pocket money for a month to know how Clarence had come unscathed out of the storm.

"Going up to the house?" asked Clarence.

"Not just yet."

"Then I'll see you latah. Ta-ta, deah boys," and

Clarence skipped along as only a counter-jumper can skip.

"I'd like to know something," said Jack.

"So would I," added Jim.

"How Clarence managed to recover from that avalanche so speedily."

"It passeth my knowledge, yea, verily it doth," said Jimmy, with a snuffle.

Just then along came Smoke and the explanation of the problem.

The boys knew at once that he had received the dish of ice-cream intended for Clarence.

"Hallo, Smoke, old man, where have you been?"

"Been to de big house yondah fo' de doctah, an' I jis' come out and done turn the corner right ahead ob Mistah Cla'ence when I got struck by de worstest snow squall yer eber seed."

"Go 'way!"

"You don't mean it?"

"Yas, I does, I done mean ebery word. De squall jis' took me off my feet an' mos' buried me."

"And how about Mr. Clarence?"

"Why, yer see de squall done stop by de time he got 'round de corner an' I got de hull ob it. Jis' my luck. Ef I'se runnin' de wedder I put a stop to sech tings."

"Yes, Smoke, they ought not to be allowed."

"Dat's what I tink, young ge'men. De doctah tol' me fo' to take good cah of dis yer suit of close, an' now de fus' day I wear dem dey gits snowed on."

Then Smoke went on his way, but not rejoicing, while the boys swapped grins.

When he was out of hearing they let out the laugh that was in them.

"Better to be born lucky than with brains," laughed Jack.

"Clarence sailed into port in fine style that time," added Jim.

"But we had our fun just the same, my boy."

"The weather is far from overheated when we miss that, my son."

"And Smoke never once tumbled."

"No, and he wouldn't if a whole snow mountain fell on him."

"Hello, here comes Tommy," cried Jack a few minutes later, as he and Jim were strolling along.

Sure enough, Tommy himself now appeared and hailed the boys delightedly:

"Did the dude get over it?" he asked, with a grin.

"It wasn't the dude at all, but Smoke, that got the dose."

"You don't say!" and Tommy laughed again.

Then he picked up a handful of snow and rolled it into a hard ball.

"Who is that for?" asked Jimmy.

"Oh, the first fellow that comes along. Hallo! there's Winder. I'll give it to him."

A man suddenly came out of a stationer's shop just ahead and walked rapidly down the street.

Tommy let fly with the snow-ball just as Jimmy cried out:

"Hold on, you idiot! that's the doctor."

But the ball had sped to its mark and struck the hat of the man ahead square on the crown.

"Now you've done it," cried Jimmy.

"Leg it, you fool!" whispered Jack.

With that he and Jim both put around the corner as fast as their legs would take them.

It was the doctor that Tommy had assaulted, and not Winder at all.

Off flew the doctor's hat, while the indignant man turned around to see who had fired the shot.

Tommy got confused as well as scared, and turned around once or twice before he finally started to run.

Then he hooked it in the very direction he should have avoided.

The result was that in just two seconds he ran smack into the principal's arms.

"Did you do that, sir?" cried the doctor, giving the luckless Tommy a shaking.

"Yes, sir—no, sir—I thought it was Winder—I didn't know it was you, sir."

All this Tommy said in a breath, stammering and shaking and trembling in his boots.

And of course he made a mess of it, as he did of everything he undertook.

First, the doctor had been mistaken for his assistant, and that made him mad.

Next, Tommy had confessed to firing the shot, and even though meant for some one else, that was an offense in itself.

"It makes no difference whom you intended to hit, sir," he exclaimed, giving Tommy a regular stirring up. "You had no business to throw snow-balls at any of your teachers."

"No, sir," chattered Tommy, but just then his feet slipped on a piece of ice hidden under the snow and down he went.

Moreover, he pulled the doctor with him, and that dignified preceptor sat down most suddenly, his coat-tails flying out and his hat bouncing down over his eyes.

He released his hold upon the culprit, and the afore-said culprit instantly scrambled to his feet and started off on a run.

Now if Master Tommy had looked where he was going he would have been all right, for his legs were speedy enough to carry him away in good time.

He did not look, however, but dashed along, head down and arms flying, his only idea being to get away.

Professor Winder was walking slowly along the street, reading a paper, when he felt himself suddenly butted in the stern and lifted off his feet.

He did not know that there were any goats in town, and was therefore decidedly astonished.

The butter was Tommy's head, however, and though a ram in one sense, was not a four-footed one, though it was a forerunner of what was to come.

Tommy's impetus carried him forward, right between the professor's legs, but not far enough to elude the professor himself when he came down.

The astonished pedagogue went up a-flying, but came down again right on Tommy's back.

Down went Tommy, and over went Winder, turning a regular flip-flap in the air, his legs looking like giant pump-handles.

Tommy fell flat on his stomach, and chewed snow, while Winder landed on his back and lay like one stunned.

At this juncture the doctor came along and beheld the second act of the catastrophe.

"What are you doing there, sir?" he inquired of Mr. Winder, who was not a favorite of his.

"Cooling off, sir," replied Winder. "A goat knocked me down."

"I would imagine that a donkey ought to be a match for a goat any time," muttered the doctor, with a grim smile, as he passed on.

He knew what had happened, of course, and was not disposed to visit any further punishment upon Tommy, considering how things had turned out.

Tommy made haste to get out of the way as soon as he had caught his wind, and this time fortune favored him, and he got safely out of the clutches of the irate Winder.

In the meantime Jack and Jim had come across Harry. Will and George and the quintette amused themselves by making a long slide on the sidewalk, over which they glided in succession and had lots of fun.

Of course the thing was as slippery as glass, and any one but a jolly schoolboy would have been sure to fall on it.

Having had all of this sort of fun they wanted, the boys sprinkled a light coating of snow over the slide, ranged themselves along the walk and awaited developments.

The first arrival was a fat Irish woman, with a basket of provisions on her arm.

The moment she stepped on the glassy surface she sat down with more force than elegance.

"Pegorrah, me spoine is dhruv through the tap av me head," she remarked with a choice brogue.

Then she got on her feet, but had gone but a few steps before she sat down again, this time right on top of her basket.

"Be heavens, the eggs 'll be cracked an' the chickens pounded to a jelly. It's bewitched I am intirely."

This time she used more care and edged off to the gutter, when she arose and took the middle of the street, though the rest of the walk was as safe as gravel.

The next to arrive was a tall darky with a pail of whitewash in one hand and a brush in the other.

He was a rakish looking coon, wore his hat on the back of his head, had on a boiled shirt and blue woolen mittens, and looked too dizzy for anything.

He came along whistling the latest thing in comic songs and winked at the boys as he passed by.

Then one foot flew up and his left leg described a great circle in the air, the right coming in a good second.

"Whoa, dere! hol' yer hosses," yelled that coon, doing a double shuffle act and trying to keep his balance.

It was no go, though, and the pail flew into the gutter, the brush took a lean countryman in the mouth, and the coon finally landed on his head and slid ten feet.

"Gorry! who grease dat 'ere sidewalk?" sputtered the darky, as he sat up and looked around.

The boys were grinning like so many alligators, and that made the artist in whitewash slightly wrathful.

"Fo' two bits I'd palyze the hull crowd," he remarked.

There were no takers, and the moke picked up himself and belongings and limped off in anything but a friendly mood.

Next came an old farmer with a collar that sawed his ears, an overcoat that showed his under one top and bottom, copper-colored overalls and boots the size of pile-drivers.

When he struck that bit of walk he struck it solid, and brought down his whole fifteen stone weight with a thump.

"Good gosh!" was all he said, but it expressed volumes.

His collar parted company with his shirt, his overcoat was divided against itself in the back and his spinal column got such a whack that he vomited his false teeth.

The boys all howled with mirth, but, strange to say, the Pumpkintown representative saw nothing at all amusing in the episode.

Instead of that, he arose in his wrath and made a bee-line for that coterie of youthful jokers.

Of course they fled with surprising unanimity, and laughed at their pursuer from a distance.

However, he caught somebody, and that somebody was entirely innocent of participation in the racket.

It was just Tommy Wright's luck to be coming along at that moment, and the farmer collared on to him at once.

"Play jokes ontew me, will yer?" he muttered, bringing his big foot in direct communication with the base of Tommy's spinal column.

"Think it mighty funny, du yer, to make me fall daown an' then laugh at me fur it?" and Tommy got a clout over the head.

"Laugh at my misfortins, will yer, yer dod-rotted imp o' mischief?" and Tommy got a rise in the world from the foe of the farmer's big boot that sent him head first into a snowdrift six feet away.

Then old Pumpkins waddled off, muttering venge-

ance on all mischievous boys, and Tommy's friends rescued him from his snowy grave.

"What was the matter with that old pig-driver, anyway?" blubbered Tommy, when he was picked out of the snow. "What had you fellows been doing? You're always getting me into trouble."

"That's a nice way to put it," laughed Jack. "We always thought that you were the Jonah of the crowd."

"Well, I ain't, and I'm going to shake the whole gang," and with that he hurried off, not knowing whether he might not get half a dozen snow-balls down his neck or in his ears.

Tommy got away in safety, however, and the boys soon followed, as it was close upon the dinner hour, and they did not care to be counted out on that score.

upon a door, and the plate fell to the floor and got a mash.

In came Mrs. Guff, and spying the new-fangled door plate, called out:

"Who did that, I'd like to know?"

For a moment all was as silent as a Quaker meeting or an assembly of deaf mutes.

Then Jimmy piped his little pipe and answered:

"Butter ask the butter, ma'am. It's old enough to speak for itself."

There was a titter all around the table, and Professor Winder, who had entered with Guff and was somewhat sweet on the widow, said:

"Is that your work, Master Grimes?"

"I'm not a dairy-maid, sir, and if I were I'd make sweeter stuff than that."

The baffled pedagogue, despairing of getting anything out of the boys, crossed the room to remove the obnoxious excrescence on the door.

By that time the butter had begun to lose its grip. It was pretty high, in two senses, and Winder reached up for it.

His face was upturned, and right in line with that greasy, new kind of door knob.

Suddenly, evidently knowing when it had a soft thing, that pat of butter let go and came down on the run.

It struck Winder right between the eyes, and stuck there like a big wart.

"Ow-ow! take it off, or I'll be strangled!" yelled Winder, while all the boys howled.



He stuck his glass in his eye, and bent over to examine the object in front of him more closely. "Fo' goodness' sake, hab de roof done fell on me or what?" gasped Smoke. "Aw, bless my hawt, it's the little niggah," observed Clarence.

The boss housekeeper of the school was a woman called Mrs. Gough, but as she always had a great deal to say, and could talk the supporters off an iron pot, she was known as Mrs. Guff all over the place.

Mrs. Guff was not only a boss talker, but was a terror to the boys as well, for she hated all males, and boys in particular, and made the latter all the trouble she could.

The boys, therefore, were not over-fond of Mrs. Guff, and when they could paid her back in her own coin.

As the boys entered the house Mrs. Guff was in the hall prepared to give them a cordial welcome.

"Wipe your feet," she snapped. "I can't have you boys go tramping snow all over the house."

"Hallo, Guffy, what have you got for dinner?" cried Jimmy, shaking his snowy cap.

The melted snow spattered over the peppery housekeeper, and she beat a hasty retreat.

"She'll get square on you for that," laughed Jack.

"But she won't get 'round me," added Jimmy.

When the boys went into dinner Jimmy found a plate of very aged butter put by his place.

That butter was old enough to vote, or almost walk alone.

Its aroma was anything but pleasing, and every boy within ten paces of it gasped for breath.

Jimmy took one whiff of it, and grabbed hold of Jack, who sat next to him.

"Hold on to me, Jack, for Heaven's sake," he gasped, "or that butter will walk off with me; it's strong enough."

Then that young loker grabbed the plate of wagon grease and hurled it across the room.

The butter fastened itself with a death-like grip

"What do you mean by wasting food in that style?"

"Food!" laughed Jimmy. "Why, I thought that was the stuff Guffy oiled her false fronts with."

"Silence, sir,"

Jimmy never opened his mouth except to engulf his grub.

"Did you throw that up there?" demanded the wrathful Winder.

Never a spake spoke James, but went right on with his hash destruction.

"If you don't answer I'll have you punished."

A mummy could not have been more silent than Jimmy on that occasion.

"I must have an answer," thundered the tutor.

"If you please, sir," answered Jack, for his cousin, "you told him to be silent, and now if he speaks he'll be breaking rules."

"Then you can speak for him. Did he throw that butter on the door?"

"Why don't you subpoena the butter and take its testimony? It's over age."

Tommy Wright giggled at this sally, and Winder fastened on him at once.

If he imagined that Tommy was going to give anything away, unless it might be the measles or small-pox, he was doomed to disappointment.

"Master Wright, did you see that stuff thrown up there?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered Tommy.

"Who did it?"

"I'm awfully near-sighted and couldn't tell who it was," replied truthful Tommy.

That caused another roar, for it was well known that Tommy could tell the time by the town clock as far as the face could be distinguished.

"I haven't had so much fun since I got licked,"

laughed Jimmy.

"Nor I," added Jack, "since I stepped on my own toe and broke it."

PART V.

PROFESSOR WINDER danced around with that sweet smelling butter stuck to his forehead until it took a tumble and fell to the floor.

Then Mrs. Guff ran to his assistance and inadvertently put her big foot on the cause of all the trouble.

She did not know what had happened until she came down with a thump that made all the dishes rattle.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," she sputtered, looking up at the professor with the greatest indignation.

"What for?" asked Winder, wiping the butter off his face with a napkin.

"For tripping me up, you clumsy fool," retorted the housekeeper. "You have no more grace than an elephant."

Then she got up and discovered what had really caused her fall, but she was not built for apologizing, and so said no more about it.

Winder himself had been made such an exhibition of that he lost even what little dignity he had, and concluded not to make any further investigations.

"Guffy gave me that aged butter out of spite," remarked Jim to Jack, "but I guess she won't try any more such tricks on travelers."

The meal was finished quietly enough, and then

the boys went off to enjoy themselves till tea-time, as it was a holiday.

Jack, Jim and Walter set off together, with their skates over their shoulders, bound for a good time.

Before they had gone a couple of hundred yards they heard a shout, and, looking back, beheld Tommy following them.

"There's your shadow, boys," said Walter.

Tommy was dragging a sled just big enough for one to sit on, and his face was radiant with smiles, likewise with grease, for he hadn't washed it.

"Let me go too?" he asked as he came up.

"Where?" asked Jack.

"I don't know," said Tommy, looking as blank as a next year's diary. "Where are you going?"

"Nowhere."

It was at this moment that Jimmy had caught on to the approaching circus.

"Just that boy's luck," he cried. "That's old Winder down there."

"Good thing for Tommy it wasn't the doc, though it might have been, just as easy."

The dufer, as Tommy called him, turned at the summary summons and looked around.

He saw his danger, but was too pig-headed to avoid it.

Should he turn aside that one of the schoolboys, and the stupidest one of the lot, might have an uninterrupted coast?

Not by several very big jugfuls.

"Get out of the way yourself," he cried.

back vestibule of Tommy's trousers would have had a dandy half soling.

As it was, Tommy felt as if his nethermost portions had been soaked in brine and then fondled with a currycomb.

He would not be able to walk straight or sit down squarely for a week after that.

The sled board was shivered at last, however, and Winder dropped Tommy off his knee into a snow-bank in great disgust.

"You boys are always aiding and abetting this young rascal," he said, as the others came up. "You will report to me for punishment on Monday morning."

"Oh, yes, of course," said Jimmy, but the leer



Winder looked up, and saw never a grin nor a smile on all those faces. By this time he was fairly on the slide. Jimmy tipped his hat in the most freezingly polite manner, and all the boys did likewise. "Well," gasped Winder, "what next?"

"Well, will you let me go with you, that's a good fellow?"

There was a shout at this and the three boys went ahead, Tommy following.

From the side of the school where they had left it there ran a sloping street leading down to the village, while on the main side the approaches were more level.

They were now at the top of this incline, and Tommy thought it a good chance to use his sled.

"Get out of the way, boys," he exclaimed, suddenly. "I'm going to have a ride. You can have the next."

Then, before they could really get out of the way, he scattered them right and left, slammed down his sled with himself on top and bowled away at a lively rate.

"Can't we dodge off by another street and get rid of him?" said Jack.

"We might," laughed Walter, "before he gets back."

"I'm blest if he isn't having his usual luck," yelled Jimmy, delightedly. "Look there."

Tommy was in luck, as usual, as Jimmy had said.

When he started down the hill he had evidently no idea that the sidewalk was intended for anything but a coasting ground for himself.

That anybody would be so stupid as to wish to walk on it seemed never to have entered his head.

When he was about half way down, however, a pedestrian suddenly turned a corner and stepped out upon the walk.

Tommy saw him, but was not seen, as the man's back was toward him.

"Hi, there, get out of the way, you dufer!" yelled Tommy.

But Tommy either couldn't or wouldn't, and on came the sled like a stone from a sling.

Then Winder's combined pride and obstinacy suddenly left him, and he concluded that he had better get out of the way.

He started, but he was too late.

The sled darted between his long legs, and down he went kerflop.

Tommy thought himself all right till a sudden thump that knocked all the wind out of him convinced him that he was not.

The professor had ended his gymnastic feats by sitting down on Tommy's back with more force than elegance.

Thereafter the sled did not proceed under Tommy's guidance, but at its own sweet pleasure.

That fetched it up against a lamp-post, and more by luck than good execution Tommy narrowly escaped dashing out what little brains he had remaining.

The sled was a wreck, however, and Tommy was tossed out into the gutter.

He had dropped Winder off some thirty feet back.

The professor made this distance on the seat of his unmentionables and beat the record.

He, too, fetched up against the post, and so suddenly that he nearly lost his false teeth.

To say he was mad would not half tell the story.

The paladin Orlando, in his frenzy, was a fool to him, and the rage of the Icelandic Berserkers was just a little bit of hysterics alongside of his wrath.

He got up, snatched a piece of the broken sled from the snow, and picked Tommy out of the gutter.

Then he brought about a combination of boy and board, which cleaned all the paint off of one and took all the spunk out of the other.

If the board could have stood it much longer, the

which he gave the frascible Winder meant anything but acquiescence in the little racket proposed.

"Tommy, my son," he said, when Winder had departed, "this little fracas of yours would be likely to get me into difficulty were it not that I intend to have an absent-minded fit on Monday and forget all about this little appointment."

"Somebody ought to wind Winder up," muttered Tommy, rubbing his flanks.

"He's wound you up, hasn't he?" gurgled Jack, imitating Winder's one-two-three motion with the sled board.

"Don't you want to come with us?" asked Jimmy. "You can sit on the ice and cool off while we skate."

"No, I don't," growled Tommy, but he soon forgot his troubles and went along just the same.

When the boys reached the river they had lots of fun skating, but as Tommy had no skates and his sled was smashed, he was forced to take his fun out in sliding.

Then, just in the midst of it all, when the boys were enjoying themselves, Master Tommy must venture on some thin ice when there were acres of solid stuff all around.

The result might have been foreseen by anybody. The ice broke like frosting on a wedding-cake, and down went Tommy up to his armpits.

He yelled blue blazes and every other colored blazes for a few moments, and then the boys managed to fish him out and stand him on the bank.

After that he wanted to stand around and see them enjoy themselves, never thinking of the possible danger to himself in so doing.

The boys would not listen to that, of course, and so

hustling off their skates, they hurried him back to the school as fast as they could put.

Tommy did not like running for a cent, being short and fat, and his wind speedily giving out.

"Don't go so fast," he sputtered, but the boys never let up on him till they had him in the house and snug in bed.

Of course their own fun was over for the afternoon, and, now that Tommy was safe, they berated him soundly for spoiling their sport.

Tommy, of course, took it all in earnest and began to blubber, and it was a long time before Jimmy could make him understand that they were only joking.

Poor Tommy had about as much idea of a joke as a pig has of watch-making.

Finally he simmered down, and then the boys left him and went to Jimmy's room.

"Jack," said Jim, "have you any marbles?"

"Yes, but I haven't played a game in so long that—"

"I don't want you to play, but only to know if you have any."

"Yes, I've got about a hundred, I guess."

"All right, then, trot 'em out. Have you any, Walt?"

"About as many as Jack has."

"Go fetch 'em, will you, and as many more as you can get hold of on the quiet."

"What the mischief do you want of marbles?" asked Jack, when Walter had gone.

"Wait and see, my boy," answered Jimmy, with just the tone and look that made Jack feel dead sure that his cousin was up to some racket.

Then he fished out a bag of marbles from his trunk, and Jimmy did the same, the boys having nearly a pint between them.

Walter came back in twenty minutes with twice as many as the boys had, and meanwhile Jimmy had swiped a big bag full from Tommy.

"Now," said Jimmy, "you want to get all you can between this and to-morrow night, but don't say what you want 'em for."

"We'll be as mum as oysters in their little beds," said Jack, "but can't you tell us what the snap is?"

"Did I ever work off a racket when you were around without letting you into it, Jacky?"

"Can't say as you ever did."

"All right, then, and I don't mean to do it this time."

Those three boys then went to work and begged, borrowed or prigged all the marbles, alleys and agates they could lay hold of in the whole school.

They did it so quietly, too, that not a soul tumbled to their little game.

Harry Gilbert was let into the snap, however, and he made a raid on Winder's desk and nabbed a full quart of the hard little spheres, the kind-hearted tutor having taken them from the boys at odd times and filed them away for future use.

On Sunday evening Jimmy took an account of atock, and found that he had five or six quarts of all kinds of marbles, big, little and medium.

"What are you going to do with 'em?" asked Jack.

"Fill Winder's pillow?" suggested Harry.

"Put 'em in Smoke's bed?" added Walter.

"Give 'em to Clarence for brains?"

"Drop 'em out of the window on Guffy's head."

"Make hash of them?"

"All your plans are good," answered Jimmy, "but I have one that will polish the stove, light the fire and set the kettle boiling."

"Well, give it to us straight."

"You know the big front stairway running from the doctor's rooms down to the main entrance?"

"You bet. We boys aren't allowed on it, but have to go by the back stairs."

"It's all in hard wood, the whole two stories, ain't it?"

"Yes, and runs straight on without a landing."

"Well, there's no carpet on it?"

"No."

"Oh, come, what's the snap?"

"We know all that. Tell us the racket."

"I'm going to set these fellows rolling down that stairway in the dead of night."

"Whew! won't there be a racket!"

"Like a fellow falling through a skylight."

"Or a mule practicing target-shooting in a tin shop."

"Or a mouse let loose in a girl's boarding-school."

Jimmy then emptied all the marbles into a pillow-case, and waited for the witching hour of midnight.

He sent Walter and Harry to their own rooms, for in case of an investigation it would not be salubrious for them to be found anywhere else.

He and Jack waited till the appointed time, being undressed and in bed, but not asleep.

Then Jimmy drew on a pair of heavy socks, girded his night-shirt about him, collared his pillow of marbles, and stole out into the passage.

All was as black as Smoke himself, and as silent as Tommy when called upon to recite.

However, Jimmy knew the route, and reached the top of the grand stairway without accident.

Then he opened the pillow-case and let loose all of its contents at once right at the top of the steps.

What a rattling there was in just one second!

Patter, patter, pat!

Rat-a-tat-tat-tat!

Rr-rr-pat-tat-rr-rr-slap!

Whir-rr-rat-tat-tat!

Bang-bang, slap-dash, scat!

What a rushing and thumping and bumping and jumping.

What a clatter and patter and scatter and everything else the matter.

Jimmy scampered off and got safely into bed just as the whole house was aroused.

Winder came rushing out, stepped on one of the marbles and bounded half way down the flight, bumping on every step before he could stop.

Mrs. Guff yelled fire and went into a fit, and still the awful noise was kept up.

Imagine all that racket in the very dead and silence of the night, as the poet chirps.

When the main body of marbles had passed there would come every now and then the sound of a straggler that had strayed by the way, rolling out of his corner and going rattlety-bang all the way down.

And that sort of business was kept up an hour after the cause—and the marbles—had been discovered.

Everybody in the house was routed out of sleep, and the doctor raised a particular how-de-do over it.

But were the perpetrators of the outrage, as it was called, collared as well as the bag of marbles?

Well, not much.

They were too fly.

Two or three days after this it snowed again, and as if it meant it, too, for the flakes were flying steadily for one whole day and part of the next.

This was roast turkey and plum pudding for the boys, especially as a half holiday came nosing along just then.

"Let's build a snow fort," suggested Jack, and the motion was passed as unanimously as one to adjourn for drinks among a crowd of bums.

"Where will we have it?" asked Harry Gilbert.

"On the playground?"

"No; in one of the vacant lots just out of town."

There was one particular lot which was bounded by a high board fence and one of the streets leading to the school.

The boys moved on this lot in a body and began operations by banking the snow in the lot up against the fence within a foot of the top.

There were two objects to be gained in doing thusly.

First they could lie on top of the bank, sheltered by the fence, and pelt snowballs upon unsuspecting pedestrians on the sidewalk below.

Next they had one solid wall for their snow house in the fence, and could tunnel as much as they pleased after that.

Having banked the snow up firm and solid, they perched on top of the fence like so many roosters, to the number of a dozen.

In this position they could see any one coming in either direction for a considerable distance.

"Here comes Smoke," cried Jack, presently.

"Shall we pepper him?"

"He got all of that he wanted the other day, and it wasn't meant for him," laughed Jim.

"Then let's give him one that is intended for him," said Power.

The boys dropped behind their barricade, and armed themselves with snow-balls, ready to shower down upon the unsuspecting coon.

Presently they heard a quick step on the snowy walk, and then Jimmy threw up a couple of snow-balls in the air.

They came down with a whack, one on top of Smoke's high dicer, and the other just in front of his nose.

"Who frow dat ball?" inquired the little stick of ebony, looking straight up in the sky.

"Golly! wonder ef it snows dem tings?" he muttered.

"Don't see nowhar else it could come from."

Then he brushed off his hat and stepped out as smartly as a militia captain.

A dozen snow-balls went up into the air and landed all over and about that young black tiger.

"Whoa dar! stop o' dat, I hain't got no 'brella," he yelled.

One of the boys happened to raise his head just then to see where to aim at, and Smoke espied him.

The minute he did so he streaked it down that street like a flash of colored lightning.

The boys sent a volley after him, but Smoke was too soon for them, and got away in good style.

He was too fly a coon to wait after seeing one boy behind the fence, for he reasoned that there were more and that they meant mischief.

"Look at that young darky hoof it," roared Jimmy. "He goes as if a whole army of imps were after him."

"This is too breezy," said Walter. "Let's have a slide."

Down came the boys off that fence, and in a few minutes a good long slide was formed on the walk.

Over this they all glided, one after the other.

"Keep the pot boiling," cried Jim, as he finished his slide and ran to the top again.

Then they all followed, as fast as they reached the end, and the slide was never without at least half a dozen occupants.

Once Tommy had the misfortune to slip and go down, and of course Jack, Jim, Walter, Harry, George, Will and as many more all piled on top of him in a twinkling.

"If the thing were all covered with sand Tommy would be sure to fall," declared Jimmy, as he arose.

"I don't see why I can't be as lucky as you fellows," muttered Tommy.

"Because you ain't built that way!" chimed in the whole gang.

Having had a good dose of sliding, and secured red cheeks and noses thereby, the boys concluded to let up on that sort of fun for a while.

Then they covered the slide lightly with snow, making the walk look as safe and innocent as gravel.

"Let's look out for suckers," said Jimmy, "and see who goes down first."

Then he climbed on top of the fence, and sat there with the bank of snow just behind.

The others followed suit, and sat beside him until there was a solid row of boys a foot apart all along the fence, and right in front of the danger spot.

Suddenly Jimmy muttered in a five-act-drama whisper:

"Get on to it, boys! Here comes Winder first of all. Watch me and do likewise."

Sure enough, there was the beloved assistant stepping along in the distance and rapidly approaching.

The boys sat on that fence as solemn as so many sparrows on a telegraph wire, and never smole a smile.

Along came Winder, looking as sweet as a swill-barrel, and wondering what racket the boys could be up to.

Just as he reached the slippery place—the best kind of walking for the wicked, it is said—he looked down.

"Ahem!" said Jimmy.

"Ahem!" echoed the whole line of boys.

Then Winder looked up, and saw never a grin nor a smile on all those faces.

By this time he was fairly on the slide.

Jimmy tipped his hat in the most freezingly polite manner, and all the boys did likewise.

"Well," gasped Winder, "what next?"

What next, indeed?

PART VI.

WHEN Professor Winder saw all the boys on the fence tip their hats to him, he asked in astonishment:

"What next?"

This was what was next.

One foot slipped from under him, and he fetched the other up to keep it company.

Then he executed a war-dance on that slippery pavement, all the while trying to keep his balance.

He performed more contortions with his arms, legs and head than a regular professional bred to the business.

He tickled his left ear with his right foot, and tried to turn a back somersault forward.

He kicked off his hat with his left foot, and scratched the buttons off the back of his coat with his right.

He waltzed all over that walk in about three seconds in struggling to retain his equilibrium.

He scraped off all the snow for a space of six feet till it was as clean as a dancing-floor.

But he lost his balance for all that, and came down with a sound like a mule beating a bass drum.

The moment he struck all those boys fell off that fence backwards and disappeared from view.

Winder slid on his rear extension for ten feet, and cleared off what snow had remained after his first exhibition of dexterity.

Then he paused and looked all around, sitting on that cold walk the picture of ruin.

He looked up at the fence, but all the boys had vanished.

"In their sympathy for me they have all fallen off the fence and broken their arms or legs—or their necks, I hope," he added, *sotto voce*.

All the same the boys did not reappear, and Mr. Winder sat there on the walk undecided whether to get up or not.

And just then along came the doctor and caught him in the act.

"Well, sir, don't you consider that a very extraordinary position for a man of your dignity?" asked Dr. Bircham.

"I consider it a very fortunate one, seeing that I might have landed on my head."

"But consider your position in the school, sir, if any of the young gentlemen—"

"My position here is what bothers me just now," returned the broken-up professor.

"Why don't you get up?"

"Well, I'm afraid I've broken something, sir."

"An arm or a leg, perhaps?" asked the doctor, solicitously.

"No, sir, but a bottle of mucilage that I had in my coat-tail pocket."

"Then I would advise you to get up before you stick or freeze to the sidewalk," remarked the doctor, dryly, as he passed on, without ever offering poor Winder a hand.

A man that could joke was not badly hurt, the doctor argued, and so what little sympathy he had had for his unfortunate assistant quickly evaporated.

When the doctor had departed Winder picked himself up, recovered his hat, and went sadly on his way, wondering whether that extraordinary act of politeness on the boys' part had not been a pre-arranged plan to cause him surprise and a consequent loss of his balance at the same time.

The boys had all tumbled over backward upon the bank of snow behind the fence, at a signal from Jimmy, and there they lay till Winder went away.

Then they got up and watched him as he walked off, his back covered with snow where he had slid over the ice.

After this they built their snow-house or fort, tunneling the bank till it was little more than a shell.

Then they left it and started making a huge snow-ball, beginning with a small one and rolling it about over the snow till it grew to an enormous size.

Tommy got tired of this sort of work, as it required too much exertion, and so he thought he would go back to the snow-house and watch the others.

It was cold, too, out in the open lot, and Tommy wanted to be in a sheltered spot such as the snow-bank afforded.

The boys were still pushing their immense sphere

of snow along, and it was now higher than their heads, when they heard a sudden yell and then a crash.

Everybody looked around, and Walter said:

"There goes the old house. It's a good thing that none of us were in it."

"But there is somebody in it," said Jack.

"Or under it, rather," added Jim.

"Who is missing?" asked Harry, looking around.

"Tommy, of course," cried George. "Who else could it be?"

Then the boys all rushed toward the snow-house, which was now a wreck.

Jimmy pretty soon found Tommy's leg sticking out of the snow, and as many as could get hold of it caught on and hauled away for dear life.

Mrs. Guff bristled up at this and Tommy got a box on the ear that made his hair curl.

"No, sir, they are alive and in—"

"Jail," howled Tommy, getting out of the reach of Mrs. Guff's big hand, however, before he ventured to make the assertion.

"They were the only boys I ever saw that were not nuisances," said Guff, explosively, as the boys trooped away to their rooms to prepare for supper.

While Jack and Jim were in their room, making their toilet, in came Tommy, full of some wild idea.

"Do you want to get even on Guff, boys?" he asked, his fat cheeks all aglow with excitement.

"What for?" asked Jack. "She hasn't done anything to us."

"But she gave me a clip on the ear."

"Yes, but he can't drag us in, for the mouse hasn't got our trade-mark on him," returned Jim, "and no one will know where he comes from."

Shortly after that the tea-bell rang, and the boys went down to the supper-room.

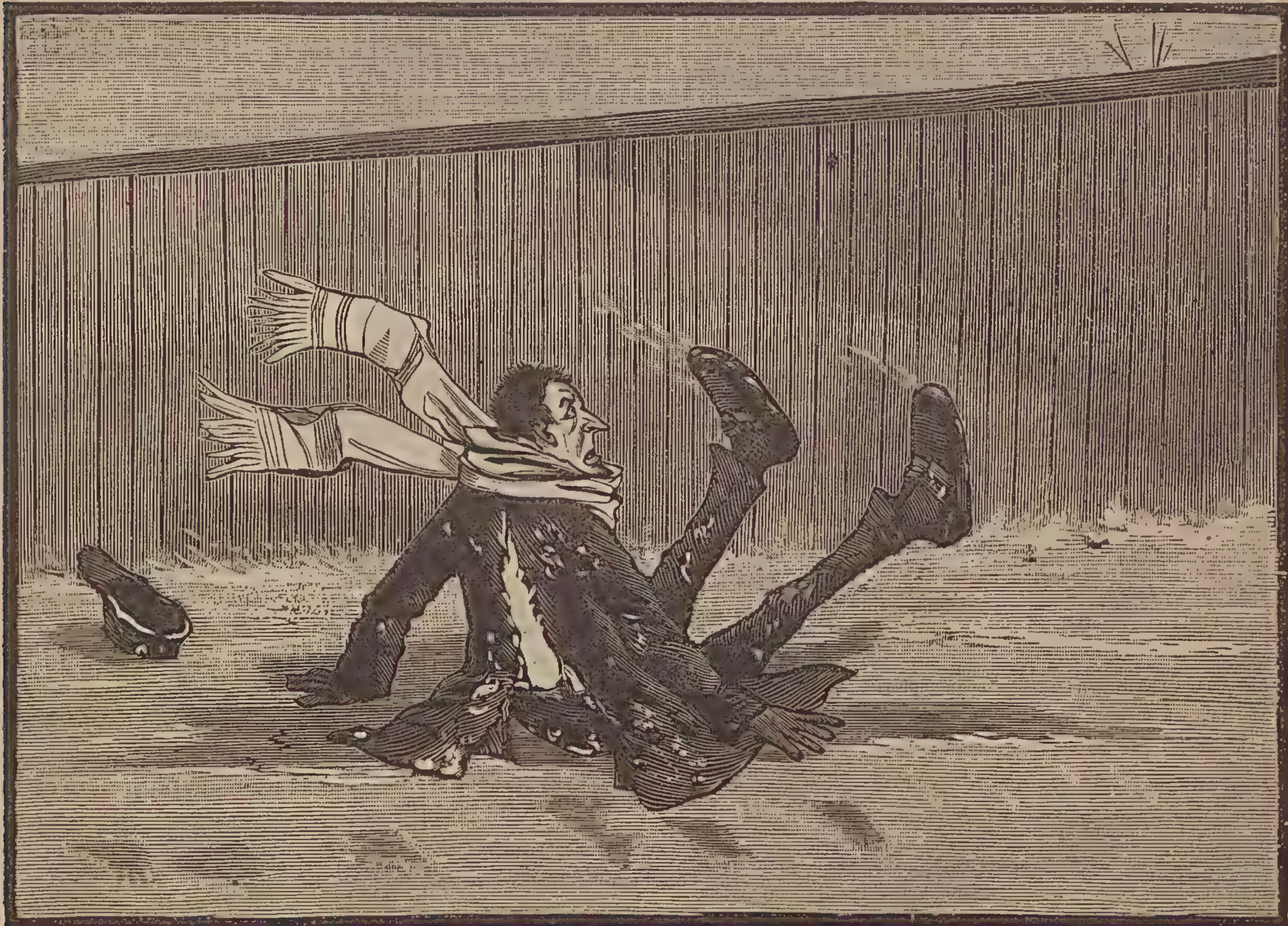
When all were seated, Mrs. Guff at the head of the table, in waltzed Smoke as solemn as a man about to be hanged.

"Man jis' brung dis fo' yer," he said, handing the lady a package neatly done up in brown paper.

"Very well," said the housekeeper, putting down the package.

"He am waitin' fer a answer, misses," said Smoke.

"Oh," and Mrs. Guff cut the strings and proceeded to open the parcel.



He looked up at the fence, but all the boys had vanished. "In their sympathy for me they have all fallen off the fence and broken their arms or legs—or their necks, I hope," he added, sotto voce.

Suddenly there was a yell, and Tommy appeared, kicking out vigorously with both feet.

Walter and Harry were sent flying, and then Jack and Jim released the struggling Tommy and set him upon his feet.

"You fellows don't know nothing," he cried. "You haul a fellow about just as if he had no feelings."

"What did you want to go in there for?" asked Jack, with a laugh. "Didn't you know it would fall in at last?"

"It would not have done so with any one else," chuckled Jim, "but Tommy always was lucky."

"You fellows may think it mighty funny," retorted Tommy, in disgust, "but if you tried it once you wouldn't think so long."

Tommy's face presented such a picture of disgust that they all laughed again, which so incensed that obese youth that he went off in the sulks and shook the whole crowd.

It was not long, however, before the boys were due at the house, and Tommy had been indoors only a few minutes when the others returned.

Of course it was hardly to be expected that a dozen boys could come into the house without making some noise.

Mrs. Guff, however, always ready to make a fuss, declared that they came in like a troop of cowboys, and that the noise they made was dreadful.

"Never mind, Guffy," said Jack. "Wait till you have a dozen boys of your own and then you'll know something."

"I have had sons of my own," snapped Guff, "and they were well-behaved, gentlemanly boys."

"They must have died young, then," said Tommy, who had come out into the hall.

"What you meant to ask was if we would help you to get hunk, wasn't it, Tommy?"

"Well, yes, that was it, I guess."

"Tommy, my boy," said Jim, "you were born under unlucky auspices, and the evil influences which surround you extend also to your companions."

"Can't you give it to me straighter than that?"

"You are unlucky yourself, and you bring bad luck on every one who goes with you," explained Jim.

"But this thing can't be found out, I tell you."

"What is it?"

At that instant Jack opened the closet door to get something he wanted.

"Why, I want to send Guff a present from—"

"Look out! there's a mouse," cried Jack.

"That comes from keeping cake in the closet," added Jim.

Jack caught up a bootjack, hurled it at the retreating rodent, and knocked him over in a jiffy.

"Just the thing," said Tommy, picking up the deceased mouse by the tail. "She's as afraid of a mouse as can be. I'll send her that."

"But how are you going to work it, my son?" asked Jack.

"Put it in a box, and have Smoke give it to her at the table."

"Are you aware that it costs something to buy that juvenile coon's silence?" inquired Jimmy.

"Oh, he'll do it for nothing, 'cause he hates Guff himself."

"Perhaps he does, but he isn't giving his services gratuitously for all that."

"Oh, I'll fix that," and away went Tommy with the mouse.

"That young idiot will get himself into another scrape," laughed Jack.

It is small and cylindrical in shape, and when the paper was taken off a collar-box was revealed.

The lady took off the cover, and out came a dead mouse, his tail being secured to the bottom of the box lid.

Mrs. Guff let out a shriek and dropped the terrible object on her plate.

At that instant one of the servants was coming in with a plate of hot toast.

She was just behind Guff when that emotion-alarm was let off, and her nerves received an instantaneous shock.

She let drop that plate of hot toast plumb on Guff's head, and then put in an addition to the scream on her own account.

"Ow!" yelled Guff, a slice of toast sliding down her neck. "Ow! I'm scalded."

The boys had caught sight of the mouse, and knew at once what had caused the fright.

They all roared, Mrs. Guff shrieked, the waitress yelled, and amidst all the noise in came the doctor, Mr. Winder and three or four other teachers.

"What's the matter?" asked the doctor, quietly.

"It's a horrid mouse," yelled Guff, who by this time had managed to rise.

"So I perceive," said the doctor, "but he cannot hurt you; he is dead."

"Take it away, take it away!" yelled Guff. "I shall faint if you don't."

The boys were now busily engaged eating their suppers.

"Where did you get it?" asked Winder. "Did it come in this box?"

"Yes, yes, that horrid young nigger boy brought it in. Oh, I am going to faint, I know I am."

She showed such strong symptoms of flopping that

Winder dropped the box and caught her in his arms. "Call Smoke," said the doctor, picking up the box and shutting up Master Mouse.

Presently Smoke appeared and the doctor interrogated him.

"Who gave you this box, sir?" demanded the doctor, sternly.

"Marse Tommy, sah," replied the coon.

"I told you so," said Jim to Jack, in a whisper.

"What for?"

"To gub to de missis."

Then the doctor looked at the box and said:

"Master Douson, this appears to be your property, so you had better come after it."

"What the dickens is to pay now?" muttered Jimmy as Jack arose.

The doctor handed Jack the box, and that young joker saw his own name, written with his own hand, on the cover.

"The box is mine, sir," he said, "but—" and then he stopped.

"But what?"

"Nothing."

It suddenly dawned upon him that if he said any more he would get Tommy into trouble, and so he remained silent.

"I did not think you capable of playing such a trick, sir," said the doctor. "Please wait for me in my study."

How the mouse had gotten into his collar-box was a mystery to Jack, but appearances were against him, and so he said nothing.

He was marching off like a little man, Winder following, when Tommy yelled out:

"It wasn't him at all, it was me. I took the box out of his room and put the mouse in it."

"Silence!" cried the doctor, but by this time Jack and Winder had disappeared.

"I say it was me," cried Tommy again. "Jack didn't do anything about it. I cribbed the box—"

Then Tommy began to howl, for Mrs. Guff had suddenly recovered and was belaboring him with both fists.

"From his room," howled Tommy, continuing, as he got away from the angry Guff, "and neither Jack nor Jim had anything to do with it."

"Is that so, Master Grimes?" asked the doctor.

"Partly," answered Jimmy. "The mouse was taken in our room, and we did know what Tommy meant to do with it."

"Did you give him the box?"

"No, he didn't," yelled Tommy, not wishing that Jim should be dragged into the scrape.

"Where is Mr. Winder?" asked the doctor.

"Went out after Jack," answered Harry Gilbert. "He looked as if he meant to give him a thrashing."

"Go and tell him he must not."

At that moment, however, Jack entered, followed by Winder, who looked triumphant.

"What have you done?" cried the doctor.

"Birched the offender, and saved you an unpleasant job."

"And taken a pleasant one—for you," said the doctor.

Winder smiled, and the boys exchanged looks of vengeance.

"I am sorry you have been punished," said the doctor to Jack.

"So am I, sir," answered Jack, dryly, "though I hardly think that you can regret it as deeply as I."

"Because I find that you were, in a measure, blameless. Mr. Winder, you will please not act without my orders again."

Winder only smiled, for he had got square on Jack, and secretly rejoiced at it.

"I will not punish you further," continued the doctor, turning to Jack.

"Thanks," said Jack. "I am quite satisfied as it is."

"Master Grimes, for your knowledge of this offense and for not trying to prevent it, a week within bounds! Master Wright, a hundred lines of Latin."

Then the doctor departed, and soon afterward the boys finished and went to the general study-room for an hour.

"Tommy, my boy, you got me a daisy licking," said Jack, as he met the luckless one, "but I don't bear you any malice."

"It was a confounded shame," said Tommy. "I explained the whole business, but that spiteful Winder had it in for you and I couldn't stop him."

"The whole school ought to get square on him," said Gilbert.

"So they will," added Walter. "I vote we take him out now and dump him in the snow."

"Not now," said Jimmy. "We would only donate ourselves if we did that."

"Well, something must be done, anyhow," put in Power.

"So it will," said Jimmy. "Leave it to me, my children."

In short, the boys had at last arrived at a point where they saw that for their own protection they must resort to summary measures.

Winder was getting altogether too breezy for his own good, and the boys resolved to make an example of him.

There wasn't a boy in the whole school who had not been made the victim of his spite, and, consequently, they were now all united against him.

During the two hours following supper Jim managed to post all the boys he cared most for, and when the time came to retire a mass-meeting was held in his room.

Besides Jack, Jim and Clarence, there were Gilbert, Davenport, Power, Sinclair, and half a dozen others,

all of whom had resolved themselves into a committee of the whole to avenge the wrongs of the school.

"What we want to do," announced Jimmy, in opening the meeting, "is to put a stop to Winder's freshness, but first we must pledge ourselves to secrecy."

"Let us sign the compact in blood," said Tommy, who had lately been reading some old-time novels, and was versed in the ways of secret assemblies generally.

"We'll cork you up if you don't keep still, Tommy," said Jim. "Now, we must act at once, so as to let this fellow see that we mean business."

"Do it to-night," cried Harry.

"That's just what I want. Now, who is willing to go in with me?"

Nobody flunked, not even Tommy, and then Jimmy laid his plan before the meeting.

An hour later the school building was wrapped in slumber and not a sound could be heard.

Then the silence was broken by the stealthy footsteps of the leagued avengers, as the yellow-covered romances say.

Professor Winder, wrapped in sleep and a flannel night-shirt, lay dreaming upon his bed.

Suddenly a woolen stocking was forced into his open mouth, and his stertorous snorings subsided.

Then he was yanked out of bed, and his arms pinned behind him with a strap.

It was dark, and he could not tell the number of his assailants, but judged that there must be a dozen at the least.

They hurried him out of the room, along the hall, down-stairs, and through the front door, under the starry heavens.

Then they tied him to a post and gave him a couple of dozen whacks across the back and legs with a rope.

He tried to yell, but the sock had been thrust in too far, and so they socked it to him well and not a sound was heard.

Then they released him, took off the strap, and half a dozen of the stoutest of his assailants froze on to him.

They ran him out of the yard, down the road a quarter of a mile, and then suddenly fired him head-first into a big snow-drift.

The last thing he heard was a chorus of derisive laughter and the muttered cry:

"This is our vengeance!"

Then he went plump into the drift like a fly in a cream-jug, and his feet were all that could be seen.

When he managed to extricate himself from the snow not a soul was in sight.

The boys had avenged themselves, and had disappeared.

Winder knew well enough that some of the boys had done the job, but who they were was beyond his knowledge.

Here he was, clad in his night clothes, away from the school and shivering with the cold.

He must seek shelter at once, and so he hoofed it toward the school as fast as he could run.

When he got there he found everything locked up.

He must get in, and so he went around to one of the cellar windows in order to force an entrance.

The fastening was not secure, and he had just succeeded in getting the window open, and was about to crawl in, when there came a rush of footsteps and a fierce barking.

"Wow-wow-wow!"

The house-dog was loose, and in a moment the luckless professor was fast.

"Bite him, Tiger," cried a voice, and Smoke appeared on the scene.

Tiger did bite for a certainty, while Winder howled and tried his best to get away.

"Bite him, Tiger," cried Smoke. "Reckon you won't want to come burglarizing 'round yer some mo'."

"Hold on!" yelled Winder.

"He am a-holdin' on," echoed Smoke. "Dat wha' I tol' him fo' to do, sah."

"But it's me! Let go, you brute!"

"Fo' goodness' sake," cried Smoke, "ef it ain't de fessor!"

"As if you didn't know it!"

"Clar to goodness ef I did," cried Smoke, calling off the dog, while Winder, suddenly released, fell through the window and landed on a pile of coal.

PART VII.

THE misadventures of Professor Winder were not over with by an overwhelming majority.

When the dog released him he fell through the open window, and landed on a pile of coal beneath.

Down this he slid, making no end of a racket, reaching the cellar floor with a thump, and striking against an empty milk-can which had been put there until called for.

Over went the can, rolling across the cement floor with a rattety-bang, fetching up against a stone wall, and rolling back again with all the noise possible.

All this racket could not but help alarm the house, and a whole army of servants came rushing to the cellar stairs to see what it all meant.

"Fire!" screamed the boss housemaid, which so scared the cook that the latter fainted and slid down-stairs, bumpety-bump, just as Winder started to come up.

The cook's big brogans took him in the shins and he slipped back, turned a somersault, and finally sat down on the floor as though he meant to dig a hole in it.

"Police!" yelled the cook, coming to her senses from the violent exercise she had taken.

"Fire!" yelled the housemaid again, and by this

time that idea seemed to be most prevalent in the minds of the household.

The janitor got out the portable hose, attached it to a plug in the hall, turned on the water and proceeded to look for the fire.

The minute he caught up the hose out came a stream of water right among the scared servants.

The way they scattered was a lesson to lazy folks, and the record was beaten all hollow.

The janitor, however, now directed the course of that water, and, thinking that the fire must be down cellar, pointed the nozzle down the steps.

Professor Winder was certainly in luck that night. He caught the stream full in the chest, and was spattered all over.

"Hallo there! what are you doing?" he yelled. "There's no fire, and if there is it isn't on me!"

Then the boys appeared, roused from a sound sleep, of course, and wanted to know what all the fuss was about.

The professor of mathematics came with them, and he proceeded to turn the water off and get Winder out of his difficulties.

"You seem to be dressed rather scantily, professor," he observed. And it will be remembered that Winder's costume, at the time the boys fired him into the snow-bank, consisted of little more than a flannel night-shirt.

"You didn't expect me to put on a full dress suit to investigate an alarm of fire in the dead of night, did you, Mr. Root?" snapped Winder.

"Oh! was it a fire? I thought it was burglars," muttered the propounder of tough mental problems.

"It's a case of assault, that's what it is!" spluttered Winder; "but I'll find out the perpetrators yet and bring them to justice for this night's work."

Then he strode off in regular red fire and slow curtain style, seemingly unmindful of the comical figure he cut.

The doctor met him and wanted an explanation, but Winder had no notion of telling his superior how he had been hazed by a lot of boys, in the very presence of the boys themselves.

"I heard an alarm of some sort, and came to investigate the cause," he said, and that was all the explanation he would vouchsafe.

"Somebody break de cellah windah and de dog git dis yer," said Smoke, coming forward as Winder retreated.

Then he held up a piece of gray flannel, which had evidently been torn from Winder's garment, as a large hole was plainly visible in the rear.

"Sleep walking again, eh?" muttered the teacher of languages, Mr. Hodson. "You'll meet with an accident some day, if you are not careful."

"What's that, Hodson?" asked the doctor, as his assistant hurried away. "Do you mean to tell me that Winder is a somnambulist?"

"He used to be, I know, sir, when he and I were room-mates in college, and I changed rooms on account of not caring to have him getting up at all times and risking his neck by walking along the gutters or balancing himself on his head on the ridge pole, and then coming in all cold and wet and lying next to me."

"It's a delightful night for a tramp outdoors in his costume," said the doctor, dryly, "but if this sort of thing continues we'll have to lock him in his room at night."

The excitement was all over and the boys were sent back to bed, those that were in the plot congratulating themselves that it would not be discovered, and those who were not being greatly puzzled to know why the others looked so wise.

The whole business was attributed to a youthful habit of Winder's which he had outgrown for years, and the doctor would accept no other explanation, telling Winder that he must have been dreaming to imagine all he had said.

Really, however, the doctor was not sorry that Winder had been given a lesson, for he shrewdly suspected that such was the case, and he took no trouble to investigate the affair further.

The boys were in high feather over the affair, for Winder had had the nonsense taken out of him, and for some days treated them like human beings, and not like so many dogs to be whipped and cuffed about.

The doctor, Professor Root, Professor Hodson and the rest, they liked, but Mr. Winder was too rich for their blood, and they could not stomach him.

About this time the skating and coasting were something particularly fine and large, and the boys used to be out every night indulging in these healthful pastimes.

Ten o'clock was the hour when they were supposed to be indoors, but Jack, Jim and their particular chums used to stretch this considerably, being admitted by Smoke for a consideration.

That young coon was on the make, and he used to fax the boys a quarter a head for staying up for them, his treasury being considerably inflated by this process.

The boy's stock of pocket money was proportionately decreased by this extortion, for Smoke had promised to let in Jack and Jim for the stipulated sum of twenty-five cents a week each.

Master Smoke, however, had the bulge on the boys, and could keep them out until they had paid up, so that they submitted to the extortion rather than be kept out all night.

Then some of the boys determined to be home in season, and not be bled by that conscienceless coon.

They presented themselves at the front door, one night, at a quarter to ten, but found it locked against them.

"That's a pretty how d'ye do," muttered Gilbert, and then he proceeded to arouse the little ducky.

"Wha' yo' want, young ge'men?" he asked, from his window.

"To get in, of course."

"Don' yo' know it am astah hours?" asked Smoke, solemnly, though they knew he was grinning internally.

"No, it ain't. It isn't ten yet."

"Well, de rules am changed an' all de young ge'men mus' be in hereafter by half pas' nine."

"Come, come, let us in, you black monkey."

"How many are dere ob yer?"

"Four," said Gilbert.

"Dat'll cos' yer two dollahs."

"What!" cried Davenport. "Fifty cents a head? You only used to ask a quarter."

"Well, de price am raised."

"You'll get a dollar and no more," declared Power.

"All right, we'll see," muttered Smoke, and down went the window.

"Confound it!" stormed Sinclair, "he's got us where the hair is short and we'll have to pony up."

"Hey, Smoky, old man, let us in," hissed Gilbert.

"Yo' gib me de two dollahs?"

"Yes, yes."

"All right."

Then the boys went to the door which Smoke held partly open.

That two cases had to be forked over before the boys could get in, and then Smoke could not be found.

Jack and Jim were later than the rest, and did not show up till half past ten.

Smoke came to the door, upon being signaled, and, opening it just wide enough for Jack to put in his hand, took the two quarters offered.

"Dat am not enuff," said Smoke, without a chuckle.

"It's all you'll get, you ebony imp."

"Am it? Guess we see 'bout that," and the door was shut.

"Here, give us back those quarters," hissed Jack.

"No, sah," answered Smoke, through the key-hole. "Dat am my commission."

"How much do you want?" asked Jimmy.

"Dollah 'piece am de price."

"Good grief! what a raise."

"Dat am what I ax. De time am changed to nine o'clock, an' yo' is mos' two hours late."

"Who changed it, for heaven's sake?"

"De doctah."

"Why didn't you tell us?"

"Case it warn't my business fo' to tell yer, young ge'men."

It was getting colder every second, and that front stoop was anything but an oven.

"He's got us, Jack," whispered Jimmy, "and we'll have to ante up, and I haven't but a quarter more in my clothes."

"Well, I have it, and I'll lend you it."

"All hunky, old man."

"Hallo, Smoke, let us in," whispered Jimmy.

"Hab yo' got de two dollahs?" asked Smoke, opening the door on the crack.

"It's only a dollar-fifty; we gave you half a dollar at the start."

"No, sah, yer gub me nuffin'."

"But I say we did."

"No, sah, an' I don' stan' yer in de col' no mo' 'less yer gub me two dollahs."

"Have you got it, Jim?" asked Jack.

"Yes."

"Then shell out, for I'm nearly frozen."

Jimmy passed in the two dollars, and Smoke opened the door and dusted.

"The young Shylock!" muttered Jim, as he and Jack went up-stairs. "We'll be robbed of all we have if we let this thing go on."

"The young monkey wants a lesson."

"And he'll get it, too."

There was still one boy out, as Smoke knew, for he kept careful count of all who came in.

The laggard was Tommy Wright.

That unlucky youngster had skated further than any of the rest, and, upon his return, found that all his chums had left the pond.

He took off his skates in a jiffy and hurried back, running all the way in the hope of catching up with Jack or Jim before they got home.

He was too late, however, and the boys were in bed.

"If I had only thought to have put my ladder out, I might get in," thought Tommy, but that did not do him any good.

He aroused Smoke, and that sable extortionist kept him outside until he had disgorged all his wealth, amounting to two dollars and a half.

Smoke knew he had it, for Tommy had received a letter from home that day which the little coon knew contained money.

Poor Tommy begged and pleaded, but Smoke was obdurate and kept him waiting till Tommy turned his pockets inside out.

Tommy could stand a good many things, but this was too much, for he knew he wouldn't get any more money for a month, and he wanted it the worst way imaginable.

Therefore he went straight to Jim's room, and being admitted, said:

"That young coon has robbed me of two dollars and a half, all I had, and I shan't have any more for a month."

"Good land, were you out too?"

"Yes, and I'm out yet—out two dollars and a half."

"It's a blessed shame."

"That Smoke is a regular pirate."

"His greed will be the ruination of him."

"This wholesale taxation has got to be stopped."

"What are you going to do?" asked Tommy.

"Leave that to me," said Jim, "and go to bed."

The next day Jimmy interviewed his chums, found

out how much they had lost through Smoke, and drew up a plan of action.

That night they pretended to go out as usual, but instead of doing so simply slammed the door a few times and then stole quietly back to their rooms.

Smoke heard the racket, and thought the boys had gone out as usual.

"Golly, I makes mo' money out ob dem boys," chuckled the coon.

Jimmy had it in for him, however, and that coon's pride was doomed to have a fall.

Just before nine o'clock Jack and Jim stole down-stairs, followed a few minutes later by George, Harry and Walter.

The door was still unbolted, and so the conspirators knew that Smoke had not yet got in his fine work.

"The easier for us," muttered Jack, as he stowed himself away in a dark corner.

Jimmy hid himself close by the front door, and the others ranged themselves along the hall where they could not be seen.

As the clock struck nine a stealthy footstep was heard coming along the passage.

All was dark, and the person approaching could not see or be seen by the waiting boys.

"Dere don' one of dem boys get in yer to-night, less dey pay me two dollahs apiece."

Thus muttered the figure, and the boys knew that it was Smoke.

Just as the little darky reached the door, with the intention of locking and bolting it, a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"No, you don't, my beauty," cried Jack.

"Fo' de land sakes! what dat?" gasped Smoke.

"It's me, and no mistake."

Smoke squirmed away and tried to escape, but Harry and Walter tripped him up, and George and Jimmy collared him before he could rise.

"Open the door!"

"Chuck him into the snow!"

"Build a snow-bank around him!"

"Keep him out all night!"

"He'll rob us again in a hurry!"

Then somebody threw the door wide open, while Jimmy and George dragged the trembling coon along the hall.

Outside the moon was shining brightly, and the snow glistened like silver.

By the light of the moon the boys now saw that Smoke had on only his trousers and shirt, having left the rest of his clothes behind.

It was bitterly cold outside, and the boys already began to feel their ears and noses tingle.

"Out with him!" cried Jimmy.

Then Smoke went flying out of the door and down the steps as if shot from a cannon.

He didn't stop to touch each step, but when he reached the broad one at the bottom his feet flew from under him, and he slid about two yards right on his back.

As he scrambled to his feet the door was closed with a bang.

"Fo' goodness sake lemme in?" he gasped as he rushed up the steps.

"Not to-night, s'mother night, good-night," laughed Jimmy.

"Won' yo', please?" wailed Smoke through the keyhole.

"Nixey."

"But I freeze to deff."

"Go lay in the snow."

That was a nice thing to recommend to a fellow already shivering with the cold.

A pair of woolen socks, trousers and a cotton shirt may do well enough for a house costume.

Come to stand out on a doorstep with the mercury down to zero and a regular cyclone blowing, however, and it's not so pleasant.

Smoke's teeth began to chatter and rattle like castanets, and he shook till you would have thought he was dancing.

"Fo' massy sakes let me in," he cle, "an' I gibs you a dollah."

But the door remained closed, and one after another the bolts, bars and chains were put in place, making it more secure.

Shaking and shivering with the cold, that unfortunate moke cried piteously to be let in.

He tried the door-bell, but the boys had anticipated this and unhooked the wire.

Meanwhile they had gone to the coon's room, lighted up and started an investigation.

In the drawer of the washstand they found a box containing about fifteen dollars in silver.

"That's what the beggar has robbed us of," said Jimmy. "I've got it all down."

"We'll whack it up, and then if that nigger gets any more out of us, he'll know it."

Jimmy took charge of the box, and then all hands went back to the door again.

"Lemme in, won' yu, please?" Smoke was saying.

Jimmy opened the door a few inches and looked out.

The moment he did so Smoke flopped down on his marrow bones in the snow, clasped his hands together and cried:

"Oh, Marse Jim, please, fo' de lub ob goodness let dis po' lilly niggab in de house."

"You won't ask us for any more money?" asked Jack.

"No, sah, neber a cent if yo' only please let me in."

"Hadn't we better let him stay out an hour longer?" said Jim, mischievously.

"Fo' de Lord's sake don' do dat," begged Smoke, still on his knees, and looking piteously at Jimmy.

"Are you sorry you—"

"Yes, I's sorry fo' eberything I eber did and neber did," cried Smoke, eagerly.

"And you won't—"

"Neber do it agin, no nev. Please lemme in, Marse Jim."

Poor Smoke!

An icicle hung from the end of his black nose, his teeth chattered so he could hardly speak, and he was the very picture of misery.

"Get in with you!" cried Jimmy, opening the door, "and don't try any more funny business on us, because it won't go down."

Smoke dashed along that hall like a streak of black lightning the moment the door opened.

Into his own quarters he darted, shutting and locking the door like a shot, and bouncing into bed, clothes and all.

"Oo-oo, how cold I is," chattered Smoke, as he ducked under the clothes and tried to warm his chilled and benumbed limbs.

Meanwhile, the boys had fastened the door, gone up-stairs and returned to their rooms, laughing over the snap they had played on the coon.

It took Smoke a good two hours to get warmed up, and all the time he was swearing vengeance against those boys.

In the morning he discovered that his money had been taken, and then he was mad, for a fact.

"De tarnation mean robbers!" he muttered, forgetting how the money had been acquired. "I was gwine fo' to hab a bully time at Christmas wid dat money, an' now dey hab done taken it. Neber min', I get squar' on dem, you see."

Jimmy had divided the money up according as the boys had paid it out, and Tommy was happy once more because he had recovered his two dollars and a half.

For two or three nights after that the boys were wary, and somebody always stayed in so as to admit the others when they returned.

Smoke made them no trouble and seemed duly penitent when they saw him, but all the time he was thinking of a big scheme of revenge.

Finally there came a glorious night for coasting and sleighing, and the boys all went out for a frolic.

There were a full dozen of them, including Tommy, and they had a dandy time of it.

The doctor had told them particularly that they might stay out till eleven o'clock, as there were no lessons the next day.

Promptly at the hour the boys arrived at the house, and found everything locked up hard and fast.

Jimmy tried the bell, but it gave forth no sound.

"Smoked out!" said Jack.

Then the boys began pounding on the door with fists and boots.

"Who dat?" cried a voice.

Then the door opened half an inch, and Smoke stuck his nose out.

"Wanter git in, don' yer?" said he.

"Looks like it," said Jack.

"Well, yer don' do it. Gib me my money back, or I keeps yo' out all night!"

PART VIII.

It looked as if our boys had rather the worst of it. Smoke was inside, and they were out.

Moreover, the door was fastened against them, and the bell was out of order.

"G'way dar," said Smoke, "I don' know yer."

"Are you going to let us in?" inquired Jack.

"No, sah, 'less yer gib me de money yo' took fom my box."

"The money was ours," said Jimmy.

"No, sah, dat money belonged to dis chile, an' I's gwine to buy my moder suffin', an' you 'tole it, an' yer don' get in till yer gibs it back."

Then Smoke banged the door and bolted it, leaving the boys out in the cold.

"I don't see but that he's got us," said Harry.

"I don't see anything of the sort," said Jimmy.

"Don' yer wish yer was in heah?" laughed Smoke through the key-hole.

"Keep talking to him," whispered Jimmy. "I have a plan."

Then he took Jack and George with him, leaving Harry and Will to keep Smoke engaged in conversation.

"We've knuckled under to that coon too long," said Jim, "and now he thinks he owns us."

"Well, it does look as if he had the bulge on us," answered George.

"Not a bit of it. Come this way."

The boys presently arrived under the window of Smoke's room, and then Jimmy said to his chums:

"Now, boys, if you'll lift me up I'll engage to get in there and execute a flank movement on that young coon."

Jack and George then helped Jimmy up so that he could look in at the window of Smoke's room.

Jimmy first tried to raise the sash, but it was fastened.

"There are divers ways of killing a cat," he remarked wisely, as he smashed a piece out of one of the upper panes with one of his skates.

Then he put in his hand like a little burglar man and pushed back the catch.

After that opening the window was as easy a job as slipping on a banana peel.

"Hunkidori!" he ejaculated, as he stepped inside.

Then Jack gave George a boost, and Jimmy helped him inside with all the ease and grace of a champion sawdust king.

After that Jack got a lift in life, and was entered into that temple of learning without an exception.

"That's one way to enter college," he laughed.

"We ain't smoked out, after all," chuckled Jim.

The boys then made the window shut up, though they had done all the talking themselves, and Jimmy caught the catch.

"Now, follow me," he said, in yellow-covered, three-volume-novel utterances.

Meanwhile, Smoke was holding a parley with the boys outside.

They were promising him all sorts of things, from a fifty-dollar overcoat to a penny whistle, if he would let them in.

But Smoke was like a city official, and wanted the boodle, and not only that, but he desired it at once.

"You young ge'men has got to make up dat twenty dollahs or yo' don' get in dis ebenin'," he remarked.

He had gone up on his price, thinking that he had a dead sure thing.

His greed was destined to prove his ruin, however.

"Oh, come down," said Harry.

"No, sah, and ef yer don' tol' me purty quick I go off an' leave yer."

"You only had fifteen dollahs in your old box."

"Well, I lose de interes', an' so I hab to ax moah. Not a cent under twenty dollar suit dis coon."

The boys kept him talking, however, and he was chuckling to himself, thinking how he was keeping them outside.

He wondered that Jimmy should be so quiet when he usually had so much to say, never dreaming of the reason.

"Come, young ge'men," he said at last. "I mus' hab an ansah right away. What'll yer gib?"

"This," said a voice behind him. As the voice struck his ear a strap struck his rear, and both produced a sensation.

He recognized the voice, but the belt had no trademark on it, and was like any other.

Not so the stunning kick he got half a second later. That was like nothing else, the gentle caress of a mule alone excepted.

It sent him flying, and his head went bump against the door as though it would split the panel.

"Keep us out, will you?" cried Jimmy, collaring the dusky young imp.

"Am dat you, Marse Jim?" whined Smoke. "Was you locked out? Now dat am too bad. I didn't mean to do dat."

"Oh, you didn't, eh?" laughed Jim. "I did not mean that you should."

Smoke saw that hypocrisy would not help him, and now he tried to wriggle away.

Nothing short of shedding his skin would have released him from Jim's grasp, however.

"Would you?" laughed Master James. "Open the door, Jack."

Jack unfastened and opened the door, and the boys came in.

"Now to clear out the Smoke," chuckled Jimmy.

Then he gave that young coon the grand bounce and locked the door.

"If that under-sized colored coon thinks he can get ahead of Jimmy Grimes, Jr., Esq.," laughed Jim. "he has a great deal to learn."

The boys laughed and went up to their rooms, leaving Smoke to get in as best he might.

He did not waste any time hammering on the door, for fear of waking up the doctor or some of the servants, in which case he would get no sympathy.

Instead of that, he managed to climb up to his own window-sill, smash the glass and get in, finding out only after having effected an entrance that the same thing had already been done before.

He did not get his money, and he did not keep the boys out, but he did get a cold and a lesson besides, and that was that Jimmy was too sharp for him.

The boys had hired him to do little jobs before this, and had paid him liberally, but now he lost all that.

He had cut open the goose that laid the golden eggs, and proved himself the bigger goose in so doing.

He wanted revenge bad, but he really did not see how he was going to get it, as the boys had proved that they were too sharp for him, and would not easily yield the advantage they had gained.

He could get no more money out of the boys, and had lost what he had got, and that made him as mad as a deluged barn-door fowl.

He was bound to get even if he could, but this last adventure took all the starch out of him for some time to come.

However, there were others to look after and play rackets on, and Clarence was one of them.

That dude had been left in undisturbed tranquillity for so long that he was beginning to put on airs.

He had made several acquaintances in town, and used to go out of nights quite frequently.

One of his friends was a young lady, whose two brothers went to Dr. Birchem's school, though they were not boarders like Jack and Jim and the rest.

Clarence had first made the acquaintance of Susie Marble at Dr. Birchem's, and had afterward called on her at her own house.

Then he had taken her to evening entertainments, to country hops, and to church, till he made himself quite at home at Miss Susie's house.

In fact, he was quite gone on the young lady, and Tom and Dick, her brothers, said he came nearly every night.

"Guess he's forgotten all about Kitty," said Jack, "and he used to be terribly sweet on her."

Kitty was Jack's sister, and the dude had paid her a good deal of attention during the summer he was staying at Jimmy's.

"Yes, an' Polly, too, is quite forgotten," laughed Jim. "I'm afraid Clarence is too fickle."

"Susie don't care very much for him, anyhow," said Tom.

"No, and she'd like to shake him if she could," added Dick.

"We haven't had much fun with Clarence lately, bave we, Jack?" asked Jimmy, with that take-the-cake grin of his.

"No, my son, we've been too busy with other matters to attend to him."

"Then it's about time we got up a surprise party for his benefit, isn't it?"

"Shouldn't wonder if it was."

"We'll get one up to order on short notice."

"Won't you let us in?" asked Tom.

"You don't want all the fun to yourselves, do you?" chimed in Dick.

"No, boys, we don't, and we want your assistance, besides."

"Count us in, every lick."

That afternoon the dude himself unconsciously gave the two jokers the very tip they wanted.

They met him down-town, coming out of a livery-stable, smoking a big cigar and looking as proud as Lucifer.

"Aw, deah boys, pwoud to see you," said Clarence.

"Same here," said Jack.

"Been buying out a livery-stable, Clarence?"

"No, deah boy; I have only been engaging a cut-tah."

"A what-ah?"

"A cuttah."

"A cutter, eh? Do you mean a sleigh?"

"Yas, deah boy; a cuttah and a span of twottahs."

"Oh, you're going sleigh-riding?"

"Yas, deah boy, I'm going to take a spin ovah the woad to-morrow."

"Take us along?" asked Jack, mischievously.

"Aw, I weally cawn't, deah boy. I shall have company, don't ye know."

"Female company?"

"Yas, deah boy, and a chawming gawl, baw Jove."

"He's going to take Guff out for a ride," laughed Jim.

"No, saw; I do not admiauw Mrs. Guff's style of beauty," said Clarence, in thirty-degrees-below-zero tones.

"No? Who, then?"

"The chawming Susie has pwomised to go sleigh-riding with me to-morrow aftahnoon."

"Oho! she has, eh?"

"Yas, deah boy, and as it is a holiday, don't ye know, I thought I couldn't do bettah, baw Jove."

Jack and Jim swapped winks, but Clarence did not tumble.

"Going up to the college?" asked Clarence, for that dude would not say "school" to save his neck.

"Not right away."

"Ta-ta, then, for the pwesent; see you latah."

Then that dandy dude ambled off like a man walking off eggs, and Jack and Jim wunk a wink once more.

They quickly found Tom and Dick, and told them of Clarence's plan, and also one of their own.

"That's boss!" ejaculated Tom. "Susie will go in with us, too."

"There won't be any mishaps?"

"Nixey."

"Well, let us know to-morrow noon, will you? We'll come down on purpose."

"All hunky."

The boys had fixed up a daisy snap to work off on Clarence, and if all went well it would be the hit of the season.

The boys visited the toy shops after this and made several mysterious purchases, taking back with them several quite large but not extra heavy bundles, which they smuggled up to their rooms.

Tommy saw them, however, and wanted to know what they contained.

"Something to make fat boys ask questions," replied Jimmy.

"Well, I have asked 'em, and why can't you tell me?"

"'Cause for," said Jack.

"For instance," added Jim.

"Oh, you're too funny."

"No, we're just funny enough."

"I'll tell you what we'll do, though, Tommy," added Jimmy. "We're going to give the dude a send-off, and we'll let you in."

That was enough for Tommy, and he asked no more questions concerning the mysterious parcels.

Those boys must have intended that Clarence's send-off should be a gilt-edged, kid-gloved, very fine, and large affair, by the way they invited the others to join.

By noon the next day every boy in school knew about it and was ready to join in.

Very likely Clarence would have changed the route of his triumphal procession, if he had known of the preparations the boys were making.

At noon a man from the livery stable in town brought a handsome sleigh, just big enough for two, and drawn by a span of elegant bays, up to the front door.

Clarence got in and drove off, leaving the man in town, and driving to the house of his charmer.

Jack and Jim met Tom and Dick as by appointment, and the arrangements for the surprise hop were fixed on between them.

"He's going around by the school first," said Tom, "and then will drive to the next town, have lunch there and come back by the old toll gate road."

"Just the thing," cried Jimmy. "He could not have arranged it better for us."

"Your sister is in with us?" queried Jack.

"Bet your life, and she thinks it will be dandy fun," said Tom.

"Except for the dandy," added Dick.

"Now we must get back to the school, and be ready for him," said Jimmy, and the quartet vacated those regions instanter.

When Clarence approached the school buildings with his fair charmer by his side, he saw not a soul in sight.

"I'm glad those howid boys are inside," he muttered, "fow they'd be sure to put up some wacket if they saw me."

"You don't think boys are horrid, do you, Mr. Jones?" asked Susie. "I think they are lovely."

"Some boys are and some ain't," assented Clarence. "Your bwothaws, faw instance."

"But you don't say which they are, Mr. Jones," said Susie, with a laugh.

"Aw, they aw lovely, of cawse, because they aw yaw bwothaws, don't ye know."

"Other boys are just as nice," returned Susie, wrapping a big muffler about her neck and pulling the top of her hood over till it nearly hid her face.

"What makes you wap up so?" asked Clarence. "It isn't cold."

"Isn't it?" said Susie, innocently.

"No."

"However, I think it is going to snow."

"Oh, no, it weally cawn't, ye know, with such a cleaw sky."

"We'll see," laughed Susie, who had been posted.

As the cutter passed the school grounds forty boys suddenly appeared as if from the ground itself. They had been posted behind sundry snowdrifts waiting for Clarence to approach.

They had been posted, as well as Susie, and in more ways than one.

"Oh, deah!" gasped Clarence, a sudden sense of danger oppressing him.

"One—two—go!" shouted Jimmy.

Clarence had just passed, and was congratulating himself on getting away safely.

Vain congratulations!

Forty snowballs flew after him and gave him a stinging welcome.

This was Jimmy's send-off.

Susie ducked her pretty head and escaped the shots, but Clarence got everything that was going.

Those snowballs patted him on the head, in the neck, on the ear, over his back and wherever they could find a lodging.

"Bless my hawt, I shall be mawdawed!" gasped Clarence.

He held tight on to the reins, grabbed the whip and gave the horses Gyp.

They dashed ahead, but not too fast to let the boys get in several more volleys.

The air was full of flying snowballs and Susie's predicted snow-storm had come in good earnest.

The young lady's precaution saved her from getting the same sort of reception Clarence had.

The boys tried not to hit her, of course, but one or two snowballs did carrom on the back of her sealskin sacque.

If she hadn't bundled herself up and ducked down, there is no telling how many cracks she might have got from those careless boys.

"This is awful," muttered poor Clarence. "I wish those howid boys would stop."

Then he got a whack on the nose which made him use very naughty words.

"Darn it all!" was the very reprehensible exclamation he made use of.

"Get up, blast you!" he cried to his team of horses. The naughty, bad words did the business.

Away went those spirited steeds, just a-humming. In a few minutes Clarence was beyond the reach of those tormenting boys.

"Didn't we give him a rouser?"

"Wasn't that a bully send-off?"

"No grasshoppers on that, eh?"

"And didn't he like it, too?"

"Oh, that was a whole Christmas tree—lights, candies, presents and all—to that dude."

"Yes, and both of his giddy socks full in the bargain."

Thus ejaculated the boys as Clarence and the sleigh became a speck in the far-off horizon.

But that was not all the good things that those dear, delightful boys had in store for him.

This was only the first course of the feast they had prepared.

The rest of it would come later on.

At the balance of the feast, however, there would not be so many assistants.

Too many onions spoil the hash, as old Sol says.

Jack, Jim, Tom and Dick were the caterers at the annex feast.

Clarence drove on, and when quite out of sight stopped and dug himself out of the snow the boys had heaped on him.

Susie also removed her superfluous muffings, and looked as pretty as a pink.

"Didn't I tell you it would snow?" she asked mischievously.

"And those are the boys you think so lovely," muttered Clarence.

"Oh, I don't mind being snowballed when I am prepared for it," added Susie, laughing.

"Then you knew those boys were going to snow-ball us?" asked Clarence, greatly horrified.

"Why, to be sure I did," and Susie laughed, more merrily than ever.

"I think you aw weal cwuel," sighed Clarence.

"What would he think if he knew the rest of it?" thought that fun-loving girl.

Well, they went on to the next town and stopped at a swell hotel, had a hot lunch of oysters and chicken patties, turkey wings and mushrooms, mutton chops and other delicacies, and then started for home.

The old toll-gate road, a mile out from town, was a decidedly lonesome place.

Doubly so was it on a winter afternoon with the sun going down and nobody in sight.

Clarence was just in front of a great gnarled oak at the foot of the hill and had slowed up in order to give his horses a rest.

Suddenly four horrible figures sprang out from behind the oak.

They were men in shape, but had awful great heads with big eyes, red noses, and cavernous mouths.

They were armed with bludgeons and blunderbusses, and wore big cloaks and steeple-crowned hats.

"Stand and deliver!" they ejaculated, in stentorian voices.

He did not relish the load on his back, but he could not shake it off, and so made the best possible use of his legs.

After he reached the top of the hill houses began to appear, and then it was a straight road home.

Clarence yelled and bawled, but that didn't stop the horse nor loosen his bonds, and the more he screamed the faster went the nag.

Our modern Mazeppa did not like that sort of business for a half cent.

He was chilled to the bone, he was tossed and jolted, and he knew that in a little while all the girls would see him in undress uniform.

"Those horrid wobbahs will pay faw this," he muttered. "I'll call out all the police!"

Now, all the police consisted of one man and an oc-

Then he stood still while all hands came running up to see what he had on his back.

"Let me off," sneezed Clarence.

The dandy Mazeppa was taken down and hurried into the office, wrapped in a big, double horse blanket. Then he hugged the stove, and between sneezes told his story.

"Where are your clothes?"

"I don't know, baw Jove. The wobbahs took them."

"Where is the sleigh?"

"In the wood, I suppose."

"Where's the other horse?"

"Don't know, 'less the wobbahs tied the dean gawl on his back and set him loose."

"How many were there of the villains?"



Those snowballs pasted him on the head, in the neck, on the ear, over his back and wherever they could find a lodging. "Bless my hawt, I shall be mawdawed!" gasped Clarence.

"Brigands!" cried Susie, in alarm, though she wasn't half as frightened as she seemed.

"Go away, you horrid fellahs," cried Clarence.

But the horrid fellows, who were our boys disguised with masks and cloaks, did not go away worth mentioning.

Instead of that two of them grabbed Clarence, while the other two escorted Susie from the cutter.

Then the horses were unhitched, while two of the bold, bad villains walked off with Susie.

Poor Clarence was in a fever of excitement.

What was going to become of him?

PART IX.

Those disguised boys, after taking Clarence out of the sleigh, proceeded to relieve him of his overcoat and other superfluous garments.

In fact, they left him nothing but his rainbow under unmentionables.

Then they strapped him to the back of one of the horses, in true Mazeppa style, and set him adrift.

The fiery untamed steed got a crack across the flanks which started him up hill and toward home at a lively rate.

Then Tom and Dick took Susie home across lots, while Jack and Jim drew the sleigh to the side of the road, dumped the dude's odds in it, started off the other horse and then put for home.

The big masks and other paraphernalia were thrown under the bridge to frighten the fishes when they should return in the spring.

In the meantime the steed which bore the luckless Clarence on his back made all possible haste toward home and a warm stable.

casional deputy, and if he should happen to be busy and refuse to be called out, Clarence would be in a fix.

Into the village street dashed that dude Mazeppa and his steed.

Talk about sensations and surprises!

There was a first-class winter picnic in about ten seconds.

All the boys in town got on to the show in an instant.

They thought Clarence was the advance agent of some dramatic troupe coming to town, and that this was his way of billing the place.

Then they snow-balled him, and poor Clarence wished them in a place where the snow would melt in short order.

Men rushed out of their shops, women left their work, and everybody ran to see the sight.

"Help!" yelled Clarence, and then a ball of snow struck him in the mouth and put a stop to his ejaculations.

All the dogs in town got after that flying steed, barked at his heels, snapped at his flanks, and made it particularly lively for both it and Clarence.

The straps cut in the dude's flesh, and his scanty garments did not protect him from the cold as a fur-lined ulster would have done, so that, altogether, he was in a pretty wretched state.

Dogs barking, men shouting, boys running, and women shrieking was more than that horse could stand.

So he stretched his legs and put for the stable as fast as he could go.

The consequence was that he went dashing into the yard before any one knew it, upset two grooms, and nearly ran over one of the boys.

"Foah, and gweat, howid fellahs with big heads."

"If you'd had a big head you'd have remembered how they looked."

"But I cawn't, ye know, faw I was too fwightened. I nevah had anything like that happen befaw."

Just then the other horse walked into the stable.

"How far from here did the thing happen?" asked the boss.

"'Bout a mile, I weckon. It was just at the bottom of the big hill on the toll-gate woad."

"If anything is stolen you'll have to pay for it."

"And who's going to pay faw my clothes?" wailed Clarence.

"Don't know, only I ain't."

Then the boss sent a couple of men off with the horses to bring back the sleigh if they found it, and meanwhile Clarence sent up to the school for a suit of clothes.

A big horse-blanket might be picturesque and even comfortable, but it was hardly the sort of costume one would want to adopt for general street wear.

"Send out faw a hot wum, if you please," asked Clarence. "I'be catching code, I belibe, a'd by doze is all stobbed up."

Then he snoze a sneeze, for variety, and hugged the stove worse than ever.

The hot rum was brought, and a pail of hot water as well, not to drink, but to stick his feet in.

"I'd give a dollah to find the wascals who tweeked me so," he muttered. "It's weal mean, that's what it is."

After awhile Jack and Jim arrived with Clarence's clothes, and, of course, were very much shocked to hear of his adventure.

They sympathized deeply with him, and threatened all sorts of things if they caught the rascals.

Clarence took it all in, and never once took a tumble to himself.

The boys made him go over the whole story, and, although they were ready to explode with laughter, they held on to their risibles like majors and never gave themselves away.

"Hanging is too good for them," said Jack, as seriously as a judge.

"They ought to be kicked by a donkey," said Jim.

"Don't you wish you had the job, Clarence?"

"Yas, deah boy, I do weally," answered the dude innocently, and then everybody laughed.

By the time the poor victim had put on the clothes Jack and Jim had brought the men came back with the sleigh.

Nothing had been stolen, and Clarence put on an extra coat and an overcoat so as to keep warm.

Of course, having taken a sweat, he caught more cold by going out again, and the next morning he coughed and sneezed and wheezed, and could not talk except through his nose.

"It's weal bead, that's whad it is," he declared.

"I be god such a code I cad speak through by dose."

"Not much of an improvement on his regular style, is it?" whispered Jack.

"No, deah boy, it is not, weally, baw Jove," answered Jim, imitating Clarence to perfection.

That poor dude was laid up for a fortnight, and was dosed with vinegar and molasses, hoarhound and tar, ginger tea and syrup of squills, catnip, cologog and a dozen other things.

He wore brown paper on his chest, and looked like a big parcel from the grocery.

He had salt pork put around his throat till he looked like a big slice of bacon.

He wore a chest-protector fore and aft, had his neck tied up in red flannel, wore big woolen socks, carried a crutch and was muffled up whenever he moved about like a mummy.

It took all the servants in the house to wait on him, and he had as many whims as a youngster getting his first teeth.

He had hot gruel, beef tea, toast, water and rice served up at all hours, and kept everybody running from morning till night.

He asked after Susie once or twice, and heard casually that she had reached home all right that day, but that she had had all the sleigh-riding with him she wanted.

That broke the dude all into little pieces, and he was as forlorn as a three-year-old bonnet.

"I think she's weal mean," he declared. "How could I know that we would be attacked by bwl-gands?"

"You couldn't, deah boy, don't ye know," said Jimmy.

"Did they evah catch the wascals?"

"Nixey catch," replied Jack.

"Did they hold Miss Susie faw a wansom, do you know?"

"Oh, they bled her dad for a couple of millions," said the voracious Jimmy.

"Weally, now. I didn't know he was so rich."

"Oh, yes, indeed."

"That's too bad, faw I'd weally like to call on her, don't ye know?"

"Oh, she won't get any of it if she marries before she is seventy-five," said Jack.

"Aw, that is wathah long to wait, deah boy. I might be dead befaw then, don't ye know."

"No, for only the good die young."

"But what's the use of waiting, deah boy, when I would be too old to enjoy it? I shall look furthaw."

"Yes, I think you'd better."

While Clarence was laid up the boys were having fun all the same, for, although they could play no more rackets on him, except to dose him with all sorts of disagreeable medicines, there were others that they could rig.

Smoke behaved like a small black saint, and they let up on him, but there was Professor Winder, and he was always a subject for pranks.

He had begun to feel his oats again and had whaled three or four of the smaller boys without provocation, so that the others thought it about time to give him another dose.

You remember the bag of marbles that Jimmy had sent clattering down the grand stair-case at midnight?

Well, Winder had gathered them up and kept them in his desk.

Now and then, when in a playful mood, he would shy one across the room at a boy who he thought was not behaving, and take him a crack in the skull with it.

Sometimes he would hit the wrong boy, but that did not trouble him any, so long as he did not miss altogether.

"What are you hitting me for?" yelled Tommy one day when, sitting perfectly quiet, he had got a crack alongside the pate with a marble.

"Oh, well, if you weren't," said Winder, "you are liable to at any moment, and it's just as well to give punishment in advance sometimes."

And that was all the satisfaction poor Tommy got.

"I'll fix you with those marbles, my man, some day," thought Jimmy.

After school he took Jack into his confidence, and they agreed upon a dandy plan, provided it would work.

They knew that Winder generally kept his desk locked, and so they must wait until they could find it unfastened.

The next afternoon a cloud of smoke suddenly puffed up through the register which was close to the professor's desk.

Jim had stolen quietly down cellar a few moments

before and thrown on a lot of damp paper on the furnace fire.

This register was the nearest to the furnace, and so Winder got the first whiff.

"Fire!" yelled all the boys in chorus.

Winder nearly went out of his chair backwards with fright.

Then he got up and dusted and all the boys after him.

Jimmy stopped long enough, however, to ransack that desk and fill his pockets with marbles.

The cause of the disturbance was soon discovered and the boys went back to their lessons.

Winder did not discover the burglary that had been committed on his desk, and Jimmy chuckled like a rooster learning to crow.

Late that afternoon, just before tea-time, he stole up-stairs to Winder's room.

He salted that unpopular master's bed with marbles, putting them under the bottom sheet.

Then he smoothed everything over in nice order and left that anything but downy couch apparently as he had found it.

That night when Winder went to bed Jack and Jim were quietly listening just outside the door.

The professor turned out the light, popped into bed, and began to use harsh language at once.

One of the marbles took him in the small of the back, another ground against his hip, two or three caromed on his shoulder-blades, and several cut into his bony legs.

"Great Scott, what a bed!" he ejaculated.

Then the boys heard him jump out into the middle of the room with a bounce.

He turned up the light and turned down the quilts, but could see nothing, of course.

"Can it be my imagination?" he muttered.

Then he jumped into bed again, and the marbles began rolling around under him and making it lively.

"Good Lord! I like a hard bed," he sputtered, "but I don't like that for a cent."

It was just because the mattress was a hard one that the marbles rolled around as they did.

Out he jumped once more, and this time he yanked off the under sheet.

Then the tom cat was out of the valise.

There lay two or three dozen marbles, looking as innocent as possible.

"Great guns! that's a nice thing to have in one's bed," growled Winder.

Then he grabbed up a handful of the offending spheres and threw them on the floor.

They rattled and danced and bounced, and one would have thought a phenomenal hail storm had suddenly broken loose.

Winder cleared all the marbles out, or thought he did, and then turned out the light once more.

On his way to the bed he stepped on one of the discarded alleys, and, losing his balance, came down with a whack.

Of course he struck on another, and he thought it had been driven into his spine.

"How the blue blazes did that happen?" he muttered, picking himself up.

Then he used some more not very nice words and got into bed again.

He was lucky, as usual, and planted his back-bone right on top of a big china alley that had escaped his notice.

"Thunder and blazes!" he yelled, and, in attempting to get out of bed in a hurry, fell head foremost on the floor.

Just beneath him was Mrs. Guff's room, and beneath where he fell was her bed.

The sudden shock loosened the plastering, and a lot of it fell on the housekeeper as she lay sweetly snoozing.

If she hadn't been unusually thick-headed the stuff would have cracked her skull.

As it was, she awoke with a yell and jumped out of bed quicker than scat.

"Fire!" she bawled, that being the first idea to enter her head.

"Cheese it!" hissed Jim, and he and Jack bolted just in time to escape detection.

Winder was as mad as blazes, and the way he yanked the things off of that bed was a caution to slow coaches.

He turned on the gas again, kicked all the loose marbles into a corner, and then made sure that his bed contained nothing that did not belong in it.

Prowling around in scanty raiment and with bare feet had given him a cold, and he now began to sneeze as though he would raise the roof.

He had none of your gentle cat sneezes, but made a noise like a thunder-clap, and when he had sneezed seven or eight times in succession the windows began to rattle.

Up came Mr. Root, Mr. Hodson and Smoke, to know what the matter was, and see if the roof had blown off.

At that moment Jack and Jim were snug in their little beds.

Tommy had heard the racket, however, and he came nosing along the hall like a sleepy-headed ghost in his long night-shirt, to see what the matter was.

Root and Hodson had already inquired, and had been informed by Winder that it was none of their business.

"All right," laughed they, as they retired.

"Ca-chew!" roared Winder as they went away.

"De plasterin' down-tairs am comin' down, sah," said Smoke, "an' Mis' Guff she wanter know if she am gwine to get any sleep dis yer night."

"Mrs. Guff be smoth—ow-ker-chow!" answered Winder.

"Yas'r, she tol' me she war a'ready wif de plasterin', an' wanted to know what war de mattah."

Just then Tommy came along and stuck his head in at the door.

"Is anybody hurt?" he asked innocently.

"You'll be if you don't get out," yelled Winder, and then he grabbed up a cane and made a dash at the unlucky youth.

Tommy got a cut across the legs, and then for the first time discovered that he had invaded the privacy of one of the professor's bedrooms.

"Owl!" he yelled. "I didn't know it was you."

"What are you doing here, anyhow?" demanded Winder, collaring Tommy.

"Nothing."

"It was you who put the marbles in my bed, you villain," and the angry tutor proceeded to make it warm for Master Tommy.

"Break away!" bawled Tommy, trying to get loose.

Smoke was watching the fun, and thought it immense.

Suddenly, however, Tommy got clear, made a bolt and dashed right against the coon, knocking him heels upward in his flight.

"You will, will you?" muttered Winder, giving chase.

He did not catch Tommy, but he did catch Smoke, and Smoke caught a whaling before Winder found out his mistake.

"Whoa dar! What yer doin'?" cried that astonished dorky.

"Oh, I didn't know I was whipping you, Smoke," said Winder, apologetically.

"Didn't yer, boss? Well, I knowed it all de time," said Smoke, rubbing his shins.

"Well, you be a good boy and I'll give you a dollar when I find one," said the professor.

"Yas'r," muttered Smoke, limping off, not at all satisfied with that sort of salve for his wounded feelings.

"Dat man mean enuff to squeeze de eagle on a quartah till he hollah," he muttered. "If I wait fo' him to gimme a dollah I get bald-headed an' hab no teet'."

"I'll give that young scamp another whaling to-morrow," muttered Winder, as he sneezed out the light and got into bed.

Poor Tommy had had enough of trying to investigate strange sounds at night, and he went back to bed meditating revenge.

"What did he mean by marbles in his bed, I wonder?" he thought. "By gum, I'll put all my tame rats in it to-morrow night, just for licking me."

"That racket worked first-rate—eh, Jack?" said Jim, when all was quiet.

"Yes, but Tommy has had another of his bits of luck, I fancy."

"He wouldn't be Tommy if he didn't have them now and then."

The next day Tommy did not get his expected thrashing, for Winder was laid up with a cold and his classes were heard by Mr. Root.

"If I thought we'd get rid of Winder every time we worked a racket on him," said Jimmy, "I'd fix one up every time he showed his nose."

PART X.

WHILE the cat is off on a vacation the mice enjoy themselves, says a certain writer of fiction.

Winder was the cat in this instance, and the boys enjoyed his temporary absence to the utmost.

They liked Root, however, and played no roots on him in consequence, which would not have been the case with Winder.

It was approaching the holiday season, and the shops in the village had a great attraction for the boys of Dr. Bircham's school.

Every afternoon they were down-town looking at and buying all sorts of things, and having lots of fun.

One afternoon Jack and Jim started off alone for a tour through the village.

They congratulated themselves on having eluded Tommy, and were looking for a fine time.

There was a fatality about Tommy that made him undesirable for a companion.

Not satisfied with getting into scrapes himself, he seemed to assist in dragging others in with him.

That sort of thing was getting monotonous with our boys.

They did not object to Tommy personally, but they did protest against the bad luck he invariably brought them.

This time, however, they had skipped off without him.

They were walking along a quiet street leading to the stores, when all of a sudden they heard a shout behind them.

Both turned and beheld Tommy approaching rapidly.

"Hallo, boys! Where have you been?" asked that rosy-cheeked urchin.

"Nowhere as yet."

"That's why I didn't find you before, for I've been looking everywhere."

"Well, what are you going to do about it now that you have found us?"

"I'm going to see the sights—ain't you?"

"I see one of them now," said Jack, looking at Tommy and laughing.

And without exaggeration that youth was a sight, and no mistake.

In the first place, it was a cold, raw day, and Tommy had prepared for it.

He wore two overcoats, the under one sticking out below the top one, and had a big muffler about his neck, which looked like the rattle affected by the condor of the Andes.

Then he had a big fur cap, as big as a peck measure, with great flaps sticking out at the sides and waving in the wind.

He looked as if he might fly away at any moment. Besides all these, Tommy carried a big cotton umbrella with a hooked handle, to keep off a possible snow-storm.

That umbrella would have sheltered the family of John Rogers, of Puritanical fame, and had room for several more.

Tommy carried it under his arm, and it stuck out a foot beyond him, fore and aft.

"What are you going to do with the circus tent?" asked Jimmy.

"Suppose it rains? I don't want to get wet."

"Suppose it don't?"

"Oh, well, it's handy to carry."

"Is it indeed?" muttered Jack, as Tommy, turning suddenly aside, to let a lady pass, took him in the ribs with the point.

"I beg your pardon," said Tommy, and then he whisked about and gave Jimmy a dig in the back with the hooked handle.

"See here, if you're going to walk with us you've got to go ahead of us," said Jack.

"That's a bull, Jacky," laughed Jim, "and if you keep on saying things like that we'll have to re-christen you Tommy and have done with it."

"How can I walk with you if I go ahead of you?" asked Tommy, opening his eyes.

"Well, go as you please, but don't keep poking me in the ribs with that umbrella."

"Carry it at your side," suggested Jim. "It's easier."

Then they went on, and presently Tommy caught sight of the village postman talking with a servant-girl in front of a house.

The girl was sweeping the snow off the walk, and the mail-distributor was giving her sweetmeats.

"Are you in for a job?" asked Tommy, his face shining more than usual.

"Not with you," laughed Jack. "You're too lucky for my time."

"What is it?" asked Jim, who was willing to take risks.

"You see that postman?"

"Naturally, not being blind."

"Well, I'll go behind him, and you get him to talking."

"Well?"

"Well, you paste him with a snowball, and when he starts to chase you I'll hook his leg with my umbrella, and over he goes."

"Big head," laughed Jack.

"How did you happen to think up so much, Thomas?"

"Will you do it?"

"Not this evening."

"Call again."

"Oh, you're scared," snorted Tommy. "I wouldn't be such duffers."

The he reversed arms with that big umbrella, and grabbed it by the middle with the handle down.

"You haven't any sporting blood in you, you duffers," he declared, as he started ahead.

"I wonder if that idiot will try the snap alone?" queried Jack.

"It certainly has that appearance."

That idiot, as Jack denominated him, walked briskly on till he came to the postman.

"Why don't you go on about your business and let the girls alone?" asked Tommy.

The man, who would have made two of the boy, looked scornfully down at him.

"Go on yourself about your business or I'll make hash of you," he muttered.

"Yai! you couldn't hurt a fly," laughed Tommy.

"You're all wind."

"I'll blow you away, anyhow."

Then he started after Tommy, who was making faces at him.

The moment he did so Tommy dodged around behind him.

Then he reached out that hook and caught the fellow around the ankle.

One good tug with both hands and the job was done.

Down went that big postman with the force of an earthquake.

Tommy, however, had made a slight miscalculation.

He had reckoned on the man falling clear of himself.

Instead of that the fellow slipped and fell right on top of his tormentor.

Poor Tommy!

He was knocked as flat as a hash-house pancake and the postman on top of him.

For such a denouement he had not looked.

All the wind, likewise spunk, was driven out of him in a second.

"Ugh!" grunted the postman.

"Ow!" yelled Tommy.

"Mercy!" shrieked the servant girl.

"Tableau," laughed Jimmy.

"In luck, as usual," commented Jack.

Then the postman picked himself up, got his wind, and yanked Tommy to his feet.

"Give him fits!" cried the servant girl, brandishing her broom.

She aimed a crack at Tommy, and, with the precision notable in people of the female persuasion, hit the postman instead.

He got a wipe across the head which made him wink.

Then he forgot the respect due to ladies, and uttered some bad, naughty words.

That riled that female servant, and she became his bitter enemy in a jiffy.

"I hit you by mistake, but now I'll do it on purpose."

That was possibly her earnest intention.

The result was not as she had anticipated.

She aimed at the postman, but Tommy got the blow on the seat of his breeches.

"Ugh!" he grunted, trying to get away from the man who was shaking him like a dish cloth.

Tommy's gyrations caused the postman to slip, and over he went on his back.

This time Tommy came down on top, with his foot in the postman's stomach.

"Get off!" yelled the man.

"Let go!" bawled the boy.

"Serve you right," laughed the maid.

Then she stood and laughed at the fracas, while the snow was rapidly cleared away by the struggles of man and boy.

Tommy had manfully held on to his big umbrella all this time, and he now got a chance to sock it to his opponent.

He embraced that chance for all that could be got out of it.

Bliff!

The postman got it fairly, right across the mouth. He let go of Tommy and began to kick.

Tommy jumped off with more agility than one would have supposed he had, and grabbed up a handful of snow.

The operation of making it into a ball was as brief as a hen's ears.

The postman got up with wrath in his eye and anger in his heart.

A snow-ball in the mouth completed the catalogue.

"Ha, ha! good shot!" laughed the maid.

"Good boy, Tommy. Now get up and dust," chirruped Jack.

"Stir your stumps, Handsome," laughed Jim.

Then those boys sailed by, while the postman went sorrowfully on his way, and the servant gal giggled.

The boys were too quick to catch the mail that postman might have given them, and the latter concluded he had had all the fun he wanted.

"Why didn't you help me?" asked Tommy, waiting for the cousins to come up.

"You didn't need any."

"Didn't I? All the wind is driven out of me."

"You do look thinner," winked Jack.

"Better hold on to that umbrella, my boy, or you'll blow away," added Jim.

Tommy had come out all right after all, in spite of his bad luck, and he soon regained his usual easy-going temper.

"Don't try any more stunts with us, Thomas," said Jack. "We got out of that one all right, but we might not be so lucky the next time."

When the boys reached the main street they soon fell in with Gilbert, Davenport, Power, Sinclair and Raynor, and then there was the jolliest mob of boys you ever saw.

"Somebody ought to treat," declared Tommy.

"All right," said Harry, with charming alacrity.

"Go ahead and treat."

"Ain't you funny," growled Tommy. "Do you think I'm going to feed an army like this?"

"No shirking, Tommy," cried Harry and Walter.

"Come ahead and treat," added George and Will.

"We'll all treat," said Jimmy. "Come on."

Then they adjourned to a pie-shop where they had often feasted before.

"Let's go in back," suggested Jack, and the whole eight filed in through the front shop to a little room in the rear, where they sat down at one long table.

"What will you have, young gentlemen?" asked the female boss of the ranch as she came in.

"Pie," they all said in chorus.

"What kind?"

"Suit yourselves, boys," said Jimmy. "This is on me."

Then they all gave their orders, and presently the woman came back with eight big cuts of pie, which she placed before her young customers.

The way those boys walked into that pie was cheerful to see, and in a few minutes nothing was left but the plates.

"Go and tell the daisy of the kitchen to repeat the dose, Tommy," said Jack, giving Jimmy a wink.

"Same kind?" asked Tommy, getting up.

"Yes."

Then Tommy went out into the front shop, where the woman was trying to convince a blear-eyed girl with ten cents in her hand that twelve doughnuts made a dozen and not fourteen, as the girl insisted.

"I get fourteen at the other shops," said the girl.

"Can't help that," warbled the woman, in sour-milk utterances. "Our doughnuts are fresh, and if you don't want 'em you needn't have 'em."

"Got any advertising cards missis?" yelled a fiend of a small boy, sticking his head in at the door.

"No," and the word was snapped out so suddenly that the thermometer fell ten degrees in a second.

"Matches, stove-blackening, suspenders?" bawled a peddler two seconds later.

"No; get out! Now, sir, what's yours?"

All this in a breath as her eye fell at last on Tommy.

"Eight five-cent pies, the same that we had before."

"Haven't got any more five-cent ones—give you eight-cent ones."

"I guess that'll do."

As long as Tommy was not paying for the treat, the difference in price did not worry him very much.

The woman collared the pies, and Tommy went back to the rear room.

"They didn't have any more—" he began, and then he stopped.

He was wasting his sweetness on the desert air, as it were.

Only the table and eight empty plates, with their accompanying knives and forks, met his gaze.

The boys—oh, where were they?

Tommy couldn't say, but he knew they were not in the room.

They had skipped out, leaving him to settle with the pie merchant.

That was what it spelled to poor Tommy.

He stood gazing at those empty plates in the utmost bewilderment.

He could not have looked blanker if he had been made of white paper.

"Where have they got to?" he asked.

At that moment the woman came into the room with Tommy's order.

The unpalatable reality that he would have to pay for the whole business dawned upon that youth in all its horror.

There was only one way out of it, and Tommy bolted.

He made one dash, upset the woman, pies and everything included, dashed through the front shop and out of the door in a trice.

Down went the woman and away flew the pies to all points of the compass.

Pumpkin pie to right, apple pie to left, mince pie before and lemon pie behind.

Peach pie in the northwest, plum pie in the southeast and gooseberry pie everywhere but in its proper place.

"Oh, the villain!" muttered the woman, as she picked herself up and gathered the scattered pies into the fold.

Then she caught sight of Tommy's big umbrella standing against the chair Fatty had occupied.

That umbrella had saved Tommy before, but now it proved to be his foe.

In his pride at being the possessor of an umbrella all to himself, Tommy had painted his name on the inside in letters large enough to read half a mile away.

"Thomas Wright, Esquire, Junior—Dr. Bircham's School."

There it was in full, and no more evidence was wanted.

"Those Bircham boys are always cutting up jokes," snapped the boss of the pie shop, "but I've got 'em this time. There's a dollar and fourteen for pies, fifty cents for plates, and a dollar for the shock to my nerves. If I'm the old umbrella isn't worth that, and it's a lucky thing for me his name is in it."

Tommy never thought of his umbrella, but only considered the question of his escape.

This he managed to effect, and losing no time, he got away from that bakery in short order.

On the next block he met the rest of the gang walking along as innocent as a flock of lambs.

"Where did you fellows get to?" he asked.

"Did you eat the whole of that last round?"

"What did it come to, all told?"

"Don't you want to treat again?"

"Ain't you smart?" snapped Tommy.

"Yes, rather," said Jimmy, laughing.

"But I say, where did you go?"

"Up the chimney," chuckled Jack, thinking of the explanation Tommy had once given the doctor for the sudden disappearance of his comrades.

The boys had skipped out of a side door, which Tommy in his fright had failed to notice, and had then made their way to the rear door, jumped over a fence and got around on the street again.

They were not telling any secrets, however, and Tommy did not learn anything.

"You fellows have got to whack up on that," he muttered.

"Oh, you paid, did you?"

"Certainly," answered Tommy, hoping to bamboozle the boys into forking over.

"Oh, then that's all right."

"Oh, I say, I've left my umbrella in the shop," cried Tommy, suddenly. "Go back after it, like a good fellow, won't you, Jimmy?"

"Left your umbrella, eh? Then you must have been in as big a hurry as we were?"

"Oh, no, I wasn't. I came out like—"

"Like a man shot out of a cannon," interrupted Jack. "Tommy, my boy, I'm afraid you didn't pay for those pies."

"Yes, I did so, but I was in a hurry to find you, and I forgot my umbrella."

"All right; then you ought not to be afraid to go back after it."

"Who said I was afraid?" blustered Tommy. "I ain't afraid. I'm tired."

Then they all laughed, and Tommy's face got as red as a small-pox flag.

However, Tommy persisted in saying that he had paid for the pies, and the matter was dropped.

If he hadn't been so obstinate the boys would have gone back and settled, but that was just Tommy's luck.

That night the lady who ran the pie shop went up to the school and took her tale of woe, and likewise Tommy's umbrella, to the doctor.

Then there was a picnic for Tommy, and he had to pay the bill, get a licking, and be restricted to the school grounds for a week in addition.

The boys heard of it the next day, and shared the expense, but not the licking.

There they drew the line, though Tommy insisted that they ought to share the whole business with him.

"Oh, no, you're too generous," said Jack. "You'd better keep the thrashing."

"I'll get hunk on that pie-woman," growled Tommy. "I don't see why she wasn't satisfied with her money without getting me walloped."

"Oh, you're tough and don't mind it," laughed the boys, and that was all the satisfaction the poor fellow got.

Winder showed up a day or so after this, and the boys had to toe the scratch once more.

Their dearly beloved teacher had not discovered who had put the marbles in his bed, but he suspected

that some of the boys had done it, and so he made it warm for all hands.

Upon his first appearance in his class-room Winder, calling Tommy up, asked:

"What are some of the products of Vermont?"

"Grain, firs, and marble," said Tommy.

"Anything else?"

"Buckwheat cakes and Yankees," answered Tommy, prompted by Gilbert.

"Where do you find marble?" demanded Winder savagely.

"In beds," prompted Jack, and Tommy answered thus, without an instant's hesitation.

"What do they raise in Florida?"

"Raise cane," answered Tommy.

"I've got a crop of it ready for you," said Winder grimly. "Step up here and get it."

"I'd a wanter," wailed Tommy, but he got there all the same.

"So they get marble in beds, do they?" and Tommy got a whack.

"Yes, sir."

"And raise Cain too, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll raise Ned with you if you play any more of your tricks," and Tommy got a dose.

He did not quite understand what it was all for, but explanations were not forthcoming, and so he shuffled back to his seat and wept a weep.

Now, the boys had been up to their little games, and just previous to this had loosened the screws in the bottom of Winder's desk, so that if anything heavy were thrown in the boards would fall out with neatness and dispatch.

Winder next called up Jack, who answered correctly all the questions put to him.

One or two others answered all right, but Power failed, much to the boys' surprise, as he generally knew his lessons.

"I won't hear any more such blockheads," snapped Winder, and opening his desk, he fired in all his books with a spiteful bang.

Crash!

Out came the bottom of that desk in a hurry.

Out upon the floor rolled a miscellaneous collection of books, ink-bottles, marbles, pocket-knives, pencils, rubbers, rulers and last of all a black bottle very suggestive of gin.

Such a rattling had not been heard for a fortnight.

The ink mixed with the gin, the rulers chased the pencils, the rubbers bounced against the books and the knives cut up great larks, while the marbles chased each other all over the floor.

"Who did this?" cried Winder, in a rage.

"Christopher Columbus!" yelled Tommy, intent on his book, as Jimmy suddenly trod on his foot.

The sudden ejaculation made Winder more furious than ever, and he shied a ruler at Master Tommy's head.

Luck was with our fat young friend this time, however, and the ruler missed him and went flying through a window just as the door opened and in walked Dr. Bircham.

PART XI.

"WHAT is the meaning of all this uproar?" asked the doctor as he entered.

He had seen the ruler go flying through the window, and wondered if his assistant was taken with a fit.

"Somebody knocked the bottom out of my desk, and I think it's Wright," explained Winder.

"I think it's wrong to throw rulers through panes of glass," said the doctor, dryly.

"It wasn't me at all," cried Tommy. "I didn't know anything about his old desk."

"How did the bottom of your desk happen to come out?" asked the doctor.

"He slammed his books into it as though he was dumping a load of coal down a chute," cried Tommy.

"No desk would stand that."

"Better put in stouter screws the next time," suggested the doctor, "and don't fill your desk so full the next time."

"The screws were removed," muttered Winder, "on purpose to make the bottom fall out. The whole thing was a practical joke."

"Well, it wasn't me that did it, anyhow," blubbered poor Tommy, thinking he was going to get a licking, after all, "and old Winder needn't say it was."

"Please be more respectful, Master Wright," said the doctor, quietly. "Mr. Winder," he continued, "you had better dismiss your classes until that window can be fixed. The cold comes in too much to allow of any one remaining here."

"The class is dismissed," said Winder in undulated accents.

The boys needed no second invitation, but got out with astonishing alacrity.

Jack and Jim and the others most interested in the snap winked at each other as they passed through the hall, but not a word did they say.

Winder knew somebody had been having a good joke at his expense, but the doctor said nothing about an investigation, and so the matter was dropped.

He picked up the contents of his desk, screwed the bottom in securely and nursed his wrath, being determined to make an example of somebody at the earliest opportunity.

None of the boys engaged in the little snap gave it away, however, and the irate tutor spied and intruded in vain.

He tried Tommy that afternoon, and meeting him alone, said, in a wheedling sort of way:

"Pretty good joke that this morning, eh, Master Tommy?"

"Bang up," answered Tommy, his face shining.

"Worthy of an artist, eh?"

"Whoever did it knows a thing or two, I reckon."

"Of course if you knew who did it you wouldn't tell of them, would you now, even if I were to give you a dollar, would you?" said Winder, coaxingly.

"I could tell better if I had the dollar," answered Tommy, who was riper than he appeared.

"Of course the boys who did it won't be punished, you know," continued the wily Winder, "though I would like to know who they are, just for my own satisfaction."

"Oh, certainly," said Tommy; "same as a fellow likes to know who plugs him in the ear with a snow-ball, so's to get square some day—not that he bears any malice, you know."

"Don't you think you ought to have a new pair of gloves?" asked the assistant. "A dollar would purchase them. By the way, did I give you a Christmas present?"

"You gave me a jolly good licking the day before you were laid up," said Tommy, whose recollections of the event were particularly vivid, "and I guess that will do."

"Please accept one now, then," and the tutor put a dollar in Tommy's hand. "You have a good memory, I believe?"

"Oh, yes, I remember the licking," said Tommy; "I can't sit down comfortably yet," and he froze on to that dollar like a man.

"Yes, but for other things, I mean. For instance, I am sure you would now recollect who took the screws out of my desk?"

"I would if I had seen it done," laughed Tommy, "but the whole snap was fixed before I got in. Tra-la-la, old Beeswax. When you get me to give the fellows away, you'll have to get up earlier than you did this morning."

Then Tommy danced off with a grin and a chuckle, and Winder realized that he had expended a hard-earned dollar for just nothing at all.

"I'm in a dollar," laughed Tommy, when he was safely away, "and old Stupid is no wiser than he was before. I reckon Jack and Jim put up that snap, but if Winder thinks I'm a sneak, he's waked up the wrong man."

Winder saw that he had no chance of finding out the perpetrators of the little joke now, since the very boy he had relied upon to give him the information had gone back on him.

There was Smoke, however, and he thought that perhaps the little coon would tell him what he wanted to know so as to get hunk on the boys.

He interviewed that small ducky, and promised him no end of reward if he would find out who the mischievous boys were.

"Spec's I know, Marse Winder," said Smoke, "but ef I tol' yer, de boys gub me a lickin' fo' dat."

"No, they won't, Smoke. I'll take care that they don't."

"Oh, yer don' know dem boys, sah," returned Smoke; "dey am de wors' boys yo' eber seed."

"I'll give you a dollar if you find out who they are, Smoke," said Winder, persuasively.

"Let me hab de dollah fus'," answered that wary coon.

He was willing enough to give the boys away, but he wanted to be sure of his pay before he took any risks.

Winder had been fooled once, however, and he didn't care to be struck twice in the same place.

"You go ahead and find out, and then I'll pay you," said he. "You niggers aren't to be trusted out of sight."

"Oh, yes, I is, marse—I se jes' as good as gold, I is."

"Find me out those boys, and I'll give you two dollars instead of one."

"Gub it to me now, boss?" asked Smoke, coaxingly.

"No!" snapped Winder.

"All right, Marse Winder, I see what I kin do," answered the little ducky, with a grin as big as his face would hold.

Now, Smoke wanted to earn that two dollars, but he was afraid of the boys, knowing well what they could do when they had a mind to exert themselves.

Later on, however, he overheard Jack and Jim laughing over the snap with Harry and Walter, and so learned who the culprits were.

"I done sink it war dem boys," he muttered to himself, "but maybe I gets mo' ef I tol' 'em to look out fo' de boss."

"That was a nice way that Tommy got around old Slabsides, wasn't it?" chuckled Jimmy, for Tommy had told him all about it.

"First rate, and if Winder thinks he's going to bribe any one he's out of his reckoning."

"There's Smoke, however," suggested Harry.

"If that coon gives the snap away we'll murder him," said Jack.

This so frightened the listening moke that he lost his balance, as he was leaning forward to catch all that was said in the room where the boys were, so that he fell against the door and threw it open in a jiffy.

He sprawled on the floor, frightened out of his wits, and the boys collared him at once.

"Been listening, have you?" demanded Jimmy.

"No, sah, neber heerd nuffin'," cried Smoke, trembling like an ash-pan, as Mrs. Partington remarks.

"And you're going to give us away?" asked Jack, catching up a water pitcher.

"No, sah; hope to die ef I do," whined Smoke, shaking in his boots.

"Well, we've got to cure you of listening at doors, anyhow. Hold on to him, Jim."

Jimmy and Harry grabbed Smoke on either side, and while Walter held his head forward, Jack proceeded to pour the ice-cold water down his back.

Smoke kicked and choked and squirmed, but all in vain, for those boys held him as in a vise.

"You need a bath, anyhow, for you're awful black," laughed Jack, as he let a stream run steadily down the coon's back inside of his shirt.

"Fo' de Lor' sakes, please don' do no mo', Marse Jack," pleaded Smoke, and the persecuted ducky looked so comical that Jack forgot what he was about and let the water gush out in a perfect flood.

Poor Smoke gasped and choked, and the boys dropped him to laugh at the queer appearance he cut.

He jumped up in a second and bolted out of that room as if he had been shot from an eighty tonner.

He went so fast that he did not see where he was going, and accordingly ran slap up against Winder, who was snooping around to see what he might discover.

His head took Winder in the stomach, and doubled him up so quick that he forgot to say his prayers.

Down went the professor Smoke on top, and for a few minutes things were very much mixed.

"What do you mean by running against me in that style?" growled Winder at length, yanking Smoke off his feet, and giving him a dandy shaking up.

"I didn' go fur ter do it, boss," sputtered Smoke. "I jes' fin' out who de boys was dat did de monkey business wif de desk."

"You have!" gasped Winder.

"Yas'r."

"Who are they?"

"Dey am in de room ober dere," and Smoke pointed out the room, as he supposed, where the boys were assembled.

In his confusion, however, he indicated another room opening on the corridor, and not the one where the boys were.

Winder fixed the room in his mind and then hurried off down-stairs to get a good long rattan, for he had a big job on hand.

Armed with this persuader, he returned to the corridor and dashed into the room that Smoke had pointed out to him.

Two steps took him to the middle of it, and then he began to cut around in the most lively fashion.

He had mislaid his glasses, and so could not see very plainly, but he did see three or four persons, and that was sufficient.

What he gave them was more than sufficient for the occupants of the room.

Instead of the boys, the persons were Mrs. Guff and the housemaid, and one of her friends, who was coming to work in the house and was being shown around by the housekeeper.

Guffy got a slash across the neck that made her think her head was cut off, and caused her to howl murder in seven different tones.

Nellie, the housemaid, got a whack on the back that induced her to dance the Irish hornpipe in quick time, and Phoebe, her friend, got it hot and heavy over the hands till she thought she had been fooling with red-hot coals.

The whole business was done inside of fifteen seconds, and all three had a dose before they knew what was going on.

Then they all began to yell, and, seeing that they only had one foe to contend with, went for him bald-headed.

Mrs. Guff whacked him with a broomstick, Nellie let fly a soap-dish, a china mug and a cuspidor at his head, while Phoebe carved the map of Afghanistan on his face with her nails.

Then they all upset him and danced on his prostrate body, till the boys, hearing the uproar, came to his relief, and an explanation followed.

"You stupid fool!" snapped Guff. "Keep your glasses on and then you won't make such mistakes."

"Saves yez right, annyhow, to go prowlin' around like a thafe in the night," added Nellie, who had no love for the surly tutor.

Jack and Jim, walking off arm in arm, after Winder had retreated in disorder, muttered to each other:

"It's a cold day when we get left."

Anyhow, that ended Winder's investigations in the direction of trying to find out the boys who had fooled with his desk.

A day or so after this Clarence, who had been laid up for over a week on account of the Mazeppa snap the boys had played upon him, made his appearance on the scene of action.

The first thing he did was to call on Miss Susie and offer her his sympathy for having escaped from the robbers on that memorable occasion.

The mischief-loving Susie never let on that her brothers had seen her home that day, that there were no robbers, and that the whole thing was a gigantic hoax on the poor dude.

She had relished the fun too much for that, and so it was caramels and pop-corn to her to lead Clarence on a bigger string, and make him think he was just a little wooden hero on rollers.

"You behaved most valiantly on that occasion, Mr. Clarence," she said, "and nobody could have done more—to make a fool of himself," she mentally added.

"Chawmed to heah you say so, I'm suah," answered Clarence, blushing to the roots of his well-oiled locks. "I flattah myself that if there had been only a dozen or so of the fellahs I could have thwashed them all woundly, don't you know!"

"Not a doubt of it," said Susie, with a smile, which Clarence took for approbation, while in reality it spelled something entirely different.

Jack and Jim learned from Susie's brothers that Clarence was making himself pretty numerous at their house again, and Jimmy suggested giving the dude another lesson.

"Do you suppose your sister will help us?" asked Jack.

"She'd be only too glad to," said Tom Marble, "for she thinks Clarence is a regular nuisance."

"Don't fret about that part of it," added Dick.

"Susie is up to snuff and will do anything to get rid of that dude."

"Our gas bills have doubled since he began coming again," laughed Tom.

"And we use a ton of coal more a week," added Dick.

"Besides keeping away the fellows that Susie likes," said Tom.

"Jack and I, you mean?" said Jim, with an expansive wink.

"Oh, to be sure."

"Then I'll tell you what to do," and Jimmy unfolded a little plan which all the boys thought just put the frosting on the plum-cake.

That afternoon Clarence received the following note written on tinted and scented note-paper in the most feminine of handwriting:

"DEAR CLARENCE:—Won't you please call at eight o'clock this evening at the house, and take me to see a friend of mine? I have no escort half as nice as you, and I can't ask those horrid brothers of mine. You are so nice that I know you will not refuse."

"SUSIE."

When Clarence collared on to this tender epistle he felt as happy as a girl with a new sealskin sacque.

"The deah gawl is wegulahrly cwushed on me," he remarked. "Baw Jove, don't ye know, I think I have made a decided impression in that quartah."

"Shouldn't wondah, baw Jove, if she'd be Mrs. Clawence Fitz Woy Jones to-morrow, if I asked her, and she's wick too, and has lots of boodle."

"Baw Jove, Clawence, old chappie, yaw in luck," he added, with a silly little giggle, quite characteristic of him. "Theah is something to you aftah all, me deah fellah."

Clarence was as happy as a bivalve at flood tide all the afternoon, and was impatient for night to approach.

He was wise enough, as he thought, not to tell Jimmy of his good luck, for he had grown wary in regard to that young joker, and was ever on the lookout for a sell.

"I don't know how it is," he mused, as he was dressing to go out, "but somehow aw othah, ewevy time I tell Jack or Jimmy anything something dweadful is shaw to happen."

He arrayed himself in his dizziest trousers, pulled himself into his tightest and nobbiest cutaway, and put on a scarf that knocked the rainbow silly for gorgeousness.

He got out his shiniest dicer, got inside of a regular love of a cape ulster of a new and most marvelous pattern, sought out his daintiest stick and got a new gold-rimmed glass to stick in his eye.

"Theah's nothing like keeping up a good impression, don't ye know," he muttered, complacently, as he surveyed himself in the glass when all his preparations had been made.

Oh, he was a slim from Slimtown, was that dude, and the flies would find no resting-place on him, in his own estimation.

He looked sweet enough to make honey think itself vinegar, and as he passed out of the front door little Smoke remarked audibly:

"Fo' de Lor', ef Marse Clarence ain't de mos' stylish geman I ever seed."

That juvenile Ethiopian was rewarded with a bright new quarter for this little piece of flattery, and Clarence walked off as proud as a cat with a fresh batch of infant felines.

It was not a very long walk to Miss Susie's house, and Clarence was prompt to the minute, the clock striking eight as he rang the bell.

The young lady herself met him at the door, and was all ready to start.

She had on a long sealskin sacque, a heavy silk dress, a nobby hat with feathers in front, and wore a thick veil over her face.

"Good-evening, Mr. Clarence," she said in a hoarse whisper. "Excuse my voice, but I have an awful cold."

"I'm vewy sowwy," muttered Clarence. "Paw-haps you hadn't bettah go out if you have a cold."

Clarence was reckoning on a nice little confab all alone in the parlor, but in this he was knocked out.

"Oh, no," said his companion, more huskily than ever, as she banged the door; "I shall soon get over it."

"Is it vewy faw to youah fwiend's house, Miss Susie?" asked Clarence as the young lady took his arm.

"No, not far," she answered, in grave-yard tones, and coughing violently.

Then they started off, arm in arm, presently leaving the town and striking into a regular country road.

"Yaw fwiend lives in the wuwal distwicts?" muttered Clarence when they had gone about half a mile.

"Yes, truly rural," said the veiled lady, hoarsely.

Presently Clarence heard a giggle, and, looking up, saw a couple of boys looking at them from behind a tree.

It was a bright, moonlight night, and objects could be seen with startling distinctness.

For this reason Clarence soon espied a dozen or more of the boys from Dr. Bircham's school taking in the whole show from the side of the road.

They laughed and they giggled, and they made all sorts of remarks, and Clarence felt in anything but a pleasant mood.

"I don't see anything so stwange in a young fellah walking out of an evening with a young lady," he remarked testily, "that a lot of wude boys should gathah by the woadside and make impudent we-marks."

"Don't mind them, Clarence dear," said his companion.

"Ah, there, you giddy masher," laughed one of the boys, Dick Marble himself, Susie's brother.

"Isn't he too sweet to be let out alone?" cried another, whom Clarence took to be Tommy.

"Get on to the style, the whole thing for ten dollars," murmured some one else.

Clarence thought it wise to pay no attention to the boys, and so marched on as dignified as a new policeman.

Much to his relief, he was not snow-balled nor otherwise molested, though for a time his heart had been in his throat for fear that he would be.

He soon left the boys behind, and he saw no more of them, but still Susie had not arrived at her friend's house.

At the end of two miles and a half Clarence said:

"I thought you said it wasn't faw to yaw fwiend's house?"

"Well, it isn't," coughed Susie.

Clarence's idea of distance differed somewhat from the young lady's, apparently, but after all he did not mind the walk very much.

It was everything nice to have a pretty young lady hanging on his arm, while he whispered all sorts of confectionery in her ear.

That atoned greatly for the trouble of going so far, and if she had only had a little more to say Clarence would have been in the seventeenth heaven of ecstatic delight.

He said all sorts of complimentary things, and when she squeezed his yellow-gloved hand he felt his very collar button tingle with pleasure.

At the end of five miles, however, Clarence's stock of society nothings was entirely exhausted, and he was at his wits' ends for something to say.

"Yaw shaw you have not missed yaw way?" he asked.

"Quite sure."

"Do you often walk as faw as this of an evening?"

"Oh, yes."

"Don't you feel cold?"

"Not at all."

"Is it much fawthah?"

"About two miles."

"Oh, Lawd!"

It wasn't much to say, but it expressed volumes.

Poor Clarence was getting cold, for his shoes were patent leathers and his trousers none of the heaviest, his gloves only thin kid and his ears unprotected.

The thought that he must walk two miles further almost paralyzed him.

If he was cold now, what would he be when he got back to the school?

"Aw ye shuah it's so faw?" he asked.

"It may be three miles," was the hoarse answer, "but it's no more than that."

And there wasn't a house in sight.

"I don't see how you can stand it," remarked Clarence, presently, "with such a bad cold."

"Oh, this is nothing, thanks."

"Won't you take maw cold?"

"Oh, no; I am as warm as can be."

"I wish I was," thought Clarence. "The next time Miss Susie gets me out faw a little walk it'll be sum-mah, I weckon. If we go much fawthah I shall be fwozen solid."

PART XII.

"Do you think it is vewy much fawthah?" asked Clarence when he and his companion had gone half a mile further, and had come to a place where two roads met.

"No, it's right near here," whispered the other in that husky voice of hers.

"Well, I'm weal glad," muttered the dude.

Just then there was heard the sound of horses' feet on the crisp snow, and the snapping of a whip.

Clarence looked around, and saw by the light of the moon a big sleigh, full of boys, nearing them.

He stepped aside to allow the sleigh to pass, and as he did so it turned the corner and started up the other road.

At that moment Clarence's companion suddenly let go of his arm and made a dash for the rear end of the sleigh.

Two boys grabbed her and assisted her in, and then the sleigh went off at full speed.

Not a word was spoken, and the boys in the sleigh might all have been ghosts for any sign of life they gave.

Poor Clarence was literally paralyzed at the sudden turn of events.

He started back, dropped his stick, and actually forgot to put up his eyeglass.

He felt as if he had been pounded on the head with a club, and was so broken up that he seemed to have lost all power of speech.

That his young lady companion would take him on a tramp of six or seven miles, and then suddenly abandon him, was a great shock to his vanity and pride.

He did not mind the walk so much as the being left alone in this cool and quiet style without a word being spoken.

He was mad and hurt and indignant all in one, and not until the sleigh had passed out of sight did he recover the use of his tongue.

"I think it's weal mean!" he at last ejaculated.

However, there was no help for it now, and the poor fellow turned around and started for home.

"I'll nevah speak to that gawl again," he declared angrily, as he hoofed it over the snow.

"The ideah of her thinking she can carwy me off into the countwy and then leave me all alone! It's positively shabby, baw Jove!"

The wind blew and the snow whirled around him, his feet were cold, his ears like ice, his nose appeared to be a chunk of stone, his fingers tingled, and altogether he felt decidedly uncomfortable.

But no amount of anger could get him home, and so he trudged on, thrashing his arms across his chest

to keep warm, and now and then running to get up a circulation.

When he had gone about two miles, a sleigh with a single occupant overtook him.

"Hey, won't you give me a wide?" bawled Clarence. "I'm most fwoze, don't ye know."

"Where are you going?" asked the man in the cutter.

"To Doctow Bawchem's school," answered Clarence, quickening his pace so as to catch up with the vehicle.

"I ain't going near so far as that—get up," cried the man, and away went the horse—licketty clip.

"Stop!" yelled Clarence. "I'll pay you if you'll take me home. I will weally."

The man never stopped, however, and poor Clarence, after running himself out of breath, had to give up the chase.

He met three or four sleighs after that going in the wrong direction, but could not induce the drivers of any of them to turn about and take him home.

Finally he struck a farm-house, somewhere about midnight, and, seeing a light in the window, walked up the lane through snow three feet deep and rapped on the door.

"Who's there?" demanded a surly voice from an upper window.

"Me," said that wretched dude, just as though everybody knew him.

"Who's me?" snarled the voice.

"I want to go home," whined Clarence.

"Wny don't you go then, and not come around waking folks up at this time of night?"

"It's too faw to walk, and I want to hiah a cuttah and a pair of hosses."

"Ain't got any."

"Haven't you anything to wide in at all?"

"Got a wood sled and an old blind nag."

"That'll do," replied Clarence, joyously.

"Well, it's over to my brother's now. He borrowed it this afternoon."

"Oh!" and poor Clarence Fitz Roy's hopes fell flat to the ground.

"That's the best I can do," said the man. "If you want to walk over to my brother's you can have the trap for five dollars."

"Wheah does yaw bwotbah live?" asked Clarence, grabbing at this forlorn hope as a ragpicker grabs for a butt.

"'Bout five miles over east."

"Oh! I guess I won't go aftah it."

"Suit yourself," and bang went the window.

Then Clarence waded back to the road and tramped on till he came to another house.

There was no light, and he proceeded to arouse the inmates, a savage bull dog being the first one out.

This creature went away with the seat of the dude's dizzy trousers in his mouth, and might have taken more had not his owner called him off in season.

Then Clarence's high hat was peppered with bird-shot and things began to get warm for him.

"Get out of here, you pesky chicken thieves," yelled the farmer, coming out of the yard.

"Don't shoot!" cried Clarence, greatly terrified.

"I have lost my way and want to hiah a sleigh to get home."

"Whereabouts?" growled the man.

"Doctah Bawchem's."

"That's too far to go to-night. Keep right along on this road and you'll find it."

"Won't you take me home?" sobbed Clarence.

"No; and if you come around here waking me up again I'll horsewhip you."

"That's weal cwuel," muttered Clarence, as he moved off. "Fawst he sets the dawg on me, then he shoots a wide at me, and then when I ask him to take me home he thweatens to hoss-whip me. It's weally too bad."

So it was, but there was nothing to be done about it, and so our dudish friend walked on mile after mile, not daring to wake up any one else for fear of evil consequences.

At last, at about two o'clock in the morning, he arrived at the school, but found everything shut up tight.

He rang and pounded and kicked at the door, he aroused the dogs and the boys and all the servants, and got a blessing all around.

"This is a pretty time to be coming in," snarled Winder, who opened the door. "I've a mind to thrash you for your impudence."

"Bettah twy it," muttered Clarence, but Winder thought not.

"Why didn't you wait a little longer and come to breakfast?" asked Mr. Root.

"Been off on the mash, have you?" inquired Mr. Hodson, dropping his usually elegant English and gliding into slang. "You ought to get slugged for it."

But Clarence was too cold and tired and cross to answer these various sallies, and so beat a retreat to his room where everything was warm and cozy.

It took him an hour to get thawed out, and then he slept so late in the morning that he missed his breakfast and his first lecture, and got several others in consequence.

In spite of his firm resolution not to speak to Susie again, he called on that young lady in the evening and demanded an explanation.

Susie received him graciously and seemed bound to be agreeable, but Clarence was mad and presently said:

"What made you wun away fwom me laht night?"

Susie opened her eyes in blank astonishment as though she did not know what he was talking about.

"It was weal unkind to make me walk so faw and then leave me wight in the middle of the woad so faw fwom home."

Susie looked as if she had been asked to unravel a Chinese puzzle and did not know where to begin.

"Don't you think that was cwnel astah inviting me to go faw a little walk to call on a fwient?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Susie, as perplexed as a mouse in a trap.

"Why, of yaw conduct of lahst night, don't ye know."

"I did not see you last night, Mr. Clarence."

"Oh!" and Clarence looked incredulous.

"Didn't you send faw me to go out with you faw a walk?"

"I?" gasped Susie.

"And didn't you take me off on a lonely woad faw six or seven miles?"

"No, indeed! You must think I'm a terrible walker."

"Naw wide home with a lot of boys and leave me all alone?"

"Of course not."

"Well, I think you did, and it was awfully wude and unladylike and I shawn't come heah again."

"Why, you must be dreaming."

"I don't think it was wight to tweek an old fwient like that."

"Are you crazy or not?" cried Susie with real surprise.

In fact, she appeared so sincere that Clarence began to wonder if he had not dreamed the whole business.

Nothing could be more real than the young lady's surprise, and Clarence began to doubt his sanity.

"Don't you weally know anything about it?" he asked, the sweat standing out on his intelligent forehead.

"Why, I never left the house, and saw nothing of you at all."

"You did not go sleigh-riding?"

"No."

"Nor send me a note?"

"To be sure not."

"I don't think I dweamed it all," mused Clarence, "but I weally think it's vewy funny."

"I'm afraid you've been smoking too many cigars and they've gone to your brain."

"Oh, no, 'pon me wawd, and then, I smoke cigawettes, don't ye know."

"Worse and worse."

"No, weally, Miss Susie, I haven't smoked in thwee days."

"Something must be the matter with you, then?"

"Weally?" asked Clarence, greatly pained.

"Oh, surely, or you would never imagine such queer things."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes."

Clarence did not know what to make of it, and as the solution of the problem required more brain power than he possessed, he quickly gave it up.

He was not at all at his ease after that, and he soon took his leave, the most puzzled dude in the whole town.

When he got back to his room he overhauled his wardrobe, found the trousers with the missing seat, the hat perforated with bird-shot, and the frozen socks he had worn the night before.

All these convinced him that he had not been dreaming, and something else clinched this conviction in his mind.

Pinned to his toilet cushion was a slip of paper, on which was written the following:

"How did you get home last night? Wasn't the walking immense? Didn't you enjoy your sleigh ride first class? How would you like another one just like it, old chappie?"

This note let in a regular avalanche of light on the perplexing problem.

"Baw Jove! I'll bet that it wasn't Susie, astah all, that I walked with," he muttered.

"I'll sweah that it was Jimmy Gwimes dweessed up, and that this is just anotheah of his twicks, and I think it's awful mean."

Poor Clarence never actually found out who it was that had played this snap on him, although we can say, for the reader's benefit, that his solution of the affair was not very far from being the right one.

"I'll nevah have any maw to do with that howld boy," declared Clarence, "naw with his cousin Jack, faw one is as bad as the othaw, and they aw both weal howld fellahs."

The snap had one good result, at least, if it did give Clarence an awful cold, for it kept him away from Susie, the dude not being so sure that she had not known something of the racket all along.

That made him mad, and he did not see her for a long time, which was just what the vivacious girl desired most of all.

Meanwhile, the boys, having had lots of fun out of Clarence, were looking around for another subject.

The night after Clarence's visit to Miss Susie there was a ladies' fair in one of the churches of the village, held for the purpose of raising money to buy the parson some new wash-tubs, or to get an organ for the church, or some such reason.

Some of the boys asked and obtained permission to attend, and among the number were Jack, Jim, Walter, Phil, and Harry and Tommy, of course.

Clarence remained at home, being short of cash, and having all the embroidered slippers, quilted dressing jackets, hand-painted handkerchief cases and other fancy articles he cared to possess for the present.

Moreover, he learned that Susie was to preside at one of the tables, and that settled it, for he had vowed not to speak to that young woman, and meant to keep his word.

The boys all went in a body, but upon entering the church parlors, where the fair was held, Jimmy no-

ticed that Tommy had a square box a foot long under his arm.

"What have you got in the box, Solomon?" he asked Tommy.

"One of my white rabbits," answered Fatty, looking very much pleased.

"What in the name of Julius Caesar are you going to do with it?"

"Exhibit it, of course. This is a fair, isn't it? Bunny might take a prize, for he's a beauty, white as milk, with lovely pink eyes, and ears eight inches long."

Jimmy gazed upon Tommy as one might look at one of the wonders of the earth.

"Well, if you ain't the biggest idiot I ever saw!" he at length ejaculated.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Tommy, innocently, opening his eyes so wide that you could not see his forehead. "Don't they always exhibit animals at fairs?"

Jimmy chuckled, and held his sides to keep his mirth within bounds.

"Yes, at agricultural fairs, you ninnny, but this isn't one. If it were, you'd take first prize, sure enough—as the best specimen of a donkey in the whole place."

Tommy looked grieved as well as disappointed, for Bunny was indeed a beauty, and Tommy had reckoned on getting some pocket money out of the exhibition, in the way of premiums.

"If it had been an animal fair," continued Jimmy, "I would have brought Clarence along and exhibited him as a prize calf, to dispute the honors with you, but now I can't."

"And I can't show him?" asked Tommy, deeply chagrined.

"No."

"Well, then, what am I going to do with him?"

"Put him in the hat-room; he'll be safe enough till you come out."

"Nobody will steal him?"

"Of course not. Everybody don't care as much for pets as you do."

Bunny's box was therefore left in the hat-room and the boys sailed around, examining the various articles on sale and buzzing the pretty girls who had charge of the booths.

Susie had charge of the grab-bag, and Jimmy was soon talking to her at a forty-knot rate.

"How are things going, Suse?" asked Jimmy, presently.

"Awfully slow," said Susie, pouting her rosy lips.

"There isn't any fun at all."

"What have you got in the bag?"

"Oh, lots of queer things, but the people won't open the parcels till they get out of sight, and that's no fun."

"Well, I'll see if I can't 'liven 'em up a bit," muttered Jimmy, getting a sudden idea into that busy head of his.

Then he went off, collared Tommy's box, took Bunny out, tucked him under his coat and went back to where Susie was.

"Open the bag," he whispered to the young lady.

"I've got a big thing to put in it."

Then he dumped Bunny into the bag and closed the top so as to permit a person's hand to go in and no-thing else.

Bunny kicked around a bit when he first lighted, but after a little he got accustomed to his quarters and nestled down in one corner quite snug and cozy.

"Ladies and gentlemen," cried Jimmy in a loud tone, "step right up here and get something out of our wonderful grab-bag. Everybody has a chance to get a beautiful ivory toilet-set and a lovely fur muff."

"Taking chances, eh?" muttered Deacon Hardfist, stepping forward. "That's agin church rules, young man. Lotteries is strictly forbid."

"No lottery at all, sir," cried Jimmy, promptly.

"You pay ten cents toward the organ and then we give you a present, anything from a sealskin sacque to a sausage grinder."

"Oh, if that's the case, I don't mind puttin' in ten cents, but I'm agin all lotteries, and won't allow 'em."

"Quite right, sir, quite right, but this isn't one. Of course you might get a handsome present, and you might not, but that's not our fault."

"They ain't no numbers to put down and all that?" queried the deacon, who was bound to observe the letter of the law while the spirit might go to Ballywhack, for all he cared.

"No, sir, no chances at all," said Jimmy, as glibly as an auctioneer. "You give ten cents to the church, and then you take out of the bag the first thing you light on."

"Is they a set of furs in the bag?" asked the deacon's wife, who wore an old woollen shawl over her shoulders about the size of a napkin.

"Yes'm, an elegant rabbit-skin set," replied Jim.

"Wouldn't you like to get it?"

"Put in ten cents, deacon, and see if you can't get it," said the wife, eagerly.

So the deacon came up with his little dime, and dove his huge paw into the mouth of the bag.

He clawed around for a time and at last lighted on Bunny.

"I've got it," he yelled, feeling the soft hair of the rabbit under his hand.

"If you've got it, keep it," cried Jimmy.

"Ow!" yelled the deacon, pulling his hand out so quick that his wig flew off.

He had got it, sure enough, and got it bad, in the bargain.

Bunny had made a decided impression on him, several impressions, in fact, with his teeth.

"Jerusalem, you've got something sharp in there," he yelled, clapping his hand into his big mouth and sucking away like a steam pump.

"That's the set of ivories," observed Jimmy, sagely.

"Let me try," said Mrs. Deacon, who coveted that rabbit-skin set, with all the ardor of a woman forced to run a small house and a big family on seven dollars a week.

The deacon ponied up and she thrust her hand into the bag and got a nip, but managed to haul out a big package which proved to be a Noah's ark, wrapped in seventeen different papers.

"Sho! we've got a dozen o' thim things to home," she sputtered.

"Aid to scriptural study," said Jimmy. "Whoever can tell Noah from his wife gets a bun."

There was quite a crowd around the grab-bag now, and business began to be brisk.

Everybody was after that ivory toilet-set and rabbit skin, and Jimmy couldn't take in the dimes fast enough.

Bunny didn't admire being stirred up so much, and he burrowed through a rag doll and a pound of broken candy till he found a snug place in the very bottom of the bag.

A timid young man, who looked as if he had to ask his mother to let him go out, drew a child's rattle and was the laugh of the crowd.

A bold young miss, with a stonewall bang covering her intelligent forehead, got a rolling-pin, the use of which she knew about as much of as a hen of walking a tight rope.

An old maid drew a doll that said "mamma," at which she blushed so red that somebody asked where the fire was.

A declared old bachelor got a pap-spoon, a small boy in petticoats drew a pistol, an old white-headed man without a tooth in his head fetched up half a pound of rock candy, and a darky wench, with a complexion like a stove-cover, was made happy by a box of pink face-powder.

So it went and there was lots of fun around that grab-bag, until at last it was nearly empty, and no one had fished out the big prize of all.

The deacon's wife had her mind set on that rabbit-skin set of furs, and she now urged her lord and master to try again for it.

"They ain't many things in the bag now, deacon," she urged, "and you're sure to get it, and I do so want a set of furs."

So the deacon planked down his dime and dove into the bag, slap to the very bottom, and collared Bunny by the ears.

This time he hauled him out and showed him to the crowd.

Everybody took a grand tumble and laughed at the joke, but just then Master Tommy came nosing around and at once identified his property.

"Hey, what are you doing with my Bunny?" he howled, making a dive at the deacon.

"Call that a rabbit-skin muff!" snarled the latter.

"It's a regular swindle, that's what it is."

"Tain't neither, it's the best and prettiest rabbit in town," yelled Tommy, "and you'd just better drop it, you old skinfint."

Then Tommy butted Deacon Hardfist in the stomach and made a grab at the rabbit.

The deacon was noted for driving a sharp bargain, and he didn't relish being called a skinfint by any means.

To be butted in the stomach by a boy and not a very intelligent one at that was also an insult that he could not brook.

He consequently dropped the rabbit and turned upon Tommy as soon as he could get his breath.

Our fat friend had secured both his prize and a good start, and was now ten paces away.

The deacon was mad, however, and so plunged forward, not looking where he was going till he suddenly ran plump against a darky carrying a tray of lemonade glasses to the supper room.

Away went darky, deacon and tray, and the crash that followed made one think the skylight had fallen in.

PART XIII.

THE crash of glass, the yell of the darky, the grunt of the deacon, the screams of the women and the laughter of the boys made that fair a pretty lively place for a few seconds.

"Kean't yo' see whar you'm gwine?" asked the coon as he got up and swabbed the lemonade off of his head and clothes.

Tommy, however, got off with his rabbit, and left the place in a hurry for fear he would again lose his pet.

The deacon declared the whole thing a skin, and wanted his money back, but Jimmy had turned in the proceeds of the grab-bag to the treasurer, and the deacon was left.

"Where's that ivory toilet set?" howled the deacon's better half, who was bound to have something.

"The rabbit took it," laughed Jimmy. "The ivories were his, and they assist him in making his toilet."

"Oh, pshaw! you mean his teeth!" cried the disgusted woman.

"Go up one for guessing so quick," cried Jack.

"Such wisdom deserves a leather medal."

Though the deacon and his partner were mad, everybody else had had a good time and declared the whole thing a success.

The committee of ladies running the thing, gave Jimmy a vote of thanks, and they all declared that but for him there would not have been near as much money taken in as there had been.

Finally the thing broke up, Jimmy selling off the articles remaining by auction, and making lots more fun as well as rocks by the scheme.

Then they all went home, the boys finding Tommy in their room waiting for them.

"You stole my rabbit, Jimmy Grimes," cried the indignant fat boy, "and you'll have to pay for it."

"What's the matter now? Didn't you get him back?"

"Yes, but that don't make any odds. You stole him just the same."

"No, Tommy, I borrowed him, and that's altogether different."

"Well, then you've got to pay for hiring him," answered Tommy, who was on the make and was bound to have that much-handled Bunny bring him in something.

"Your rabbit isn't hurt, is he?" demanded Jimmy.

"No," answered Tommy hesitatingly.

Winder heard him; however, and colored up, for he was sensitive on the subject of that nose of his, and did not like to have any allusions made to it.

Therefore, he proceeded to get up a royal old reception, with drums beating, banners flying, populace shouting, music playing, and grub and wine all around, with fireworks at night.

All this for Tommy.

He laid that luckless fat boy over a bench and just banged away on his back cellar door with a bunch of birch switches till his arm ached.

Tommy yelled and kicked and squirmed like an eel being deprived of its jacket, but that didn't stop the shower of blows for a half cent.

Winder kept right on as though he liked it, and would have probably suspended lessons for the rest of

not one of the sort to merit or receive thrashings very often.

He took two good handfuls of a licking like a little brick and never once winced, though Winder did his best to make him holler.

At last, however, he desisted from sheer exhaustion, and said:

"Now you can go back to your seat, and don't let me hear you whispering again. I'll have order in this school if I thrash every boy in it."

"Looks to me as if he meant to do that, anyhow, don't it to you?" whispered Jack to Jim.

"If you have any doubts on that subject, you'd better get rid of them at once," answered Jim, in the same tones.



He scowled as black as an iron pot, raised one of his big feet, spread out his hands and prepared to kick that bit of mockery before him out of existence.

"And you've got him back safe?"

"Yes."

"Then what are you kicking about?"

"What made you take him out of his box, that's what I want to know?"

"Ask me something easier, Tommy," said Jimmy with a laugh. "That knocks me out."

Tommy saw that he could not make anything out of Jimmy, and so he concluded to go to bed, which he might just as well have done half an hour before.

The next day Dr. Bircham was sick and Winder took charge of the school on account of his seniority in rank.

The boys would have much preferred having Mr. Root or Mr. Hodson or any one of the other instructors to look after them, for they hated Winder, and knew that he bore them no great affection.

When all were assembled in the doctor's room, Winder came in, took a seat and announced that he was at the head of affairs for that day.

Then the boys knew that trouble was coming, and poor Tommy groaned.

"What's the matter with you, Wright?" snapped Winder.

"Stomache," gasped Tommy, that being the first excuse he could invent.

"You'd better look out or you may ache somewhere else before night," returned the irate Winder. "Step out here, sir."

Tommy stepped, but Harry Gilbert had his foot outside the line of its base, and Tommy tripped on it and came down like a load of coal.

"Can't you see where you are going?" asked Winder, in no gentle tones.

"No, sir."

"Follow your nose, then, it's big enough."

"Tain't half so long as yours nor so red," muttered Tommy, under his breath.

the day in order to warm Tommy, if the bunch of switches hadn't bursted their waist-band and gone flying all over the floor.

"That'll do for now," said Winder.

Tommy thought so, too, as he got up and stood waiting for further orders.

"Go to your seat, and if you make any more noise I'll skin you."

"What do you call this?" muttered Tommy, as he started back.

"What do you say?"

"Nothing."

"Then don't say it so loud the next time, or I may make you say something," retorted the assistant, grimly.

It was such an ordinary event for Tommy to get whaled, that no one thought anything about it, nor gave the matter a second consideration.

"What made you trip me up?" muttered Tommy, as he went back to his seat, addressing Gilbert.

"Did I?" asked Harry, as innocent as a pig with an apple in its mouth.

"Yes, you did."

"Oh!"

"Come out here, Gilbert," cried Winder. "You are whispering, and you know it's against the rules."

Master Harry resembled the little roaster more than ever now, since he was about to get a basting.

"I spoke to him first," said poor Tommy, realizing that Harry was going to get a licking on his account.

"That's no excuse for his speaking," snapped the other. "A body is not obliged to answer a fool every time one addresses him."

That was another on Tommy, but he did not mind being called a fool when a thrashing did not accompany the compliment.

So Harry stepped out and got his little dose of birch, and that did surprise the boys, for Harry was

Harry went back to his seat, and the lessons of the day started off.

Tom and Dick Marble, George Power, Walter Davenport, Ralph Raynor, Joe Dunne and Will Sinclair went up first to recite a history lesson, taking their books with them.

As the boys passed along the aisle on their way to the front Jimmy fastened a fish hook in the cloth cover of the book under Will Sinclair's arm.

It will be needless to say that a strong though fine line was attached to that same hook.

This Jimmy allowed to run out until Will, who was the last boy on the string, was about to take his seat on the settee in front of Winder's desk.

Then the young joker gave that line a sudden yank, and away went the book as though its leaves were all wings.

It went sailing over the desks like a big bird, while Will looked after it in undisguised astonishment.

Finally it took Phil Sutton alongside the head, and made a stronger impression upon him than history had ever made before.

Jimmy tried to haul in on the line, but Phil grabbed the hook and held on to it, tooth and nail.

Jack saw Jim's dilemma, and he whipped out his knife and cut the line in a brace of vibrations.

"What do you mean by throwing your book about in that manner, Sinclair?" asked Winder angrily.

"Didn't, sir; it flew out from under my arm," said Will.

Phil had by this time discovered the fish-hook, which he hurriedly tore out and dropped on the floor.

He knew somebody had been having a joke at Will's expense, but it wasn't his business to give any one away, and he wasn't going to do so.

"Bring that book here, Sutton," snarled the exasperated Winder, and Phil obeyed.

"How did it get into your possession?"

"Don't know, sir, must have flown."

"I'll make something fly if I find out who gets up all these tricks," growled the assistant.

Then he boxed Phil's ears to relieve his feelings, and cuffed Will on the side of the head for having lost his book, after which he went on with the lesson.

George made a trifling mistake, and got a cut across the hand for it, Walter moved in his seat and was rewarded with a crack over the knee, and Ralph, Joe and Tom got from one to half a dozen cuts with the rattan for laughing, Dick being the only one to escape out of the whole batch.

After this other classes were called up to recite and some of the boys went off to other rooms to say their lessons, and so got away from Winder for a time.

Will Sinclair, smarting under the indignity of having been boxed on the ears without cause, managed, while on his way from Mr. Root's room, to slip upstairs to his dormitory, get a bean-shooter and some putty and return without his absence being detected.

Soon afterwards Winder turned to the blackboard to explain something and Will let drive at his ear.

The aim was good enough, but Winder turned around sooner than was expected, hearing a noise in a distant part of the room.

The pellet of putty took him upon the end of his pretty red nose and made him jump so that his gig lamps, otherwise glasses, fell off.

All the boys were quietly studying, and Winder had no suspicion of where the thing had come from.

Besides that, he could not see at all well without his specs, and Will was well aware of the fact.

Emboldened by his former success, Will clapped the shooter to his mouth while Winder was trying to find his glasses, and let fly.

This time the smart little bullet flattened itself on Winder's cheek and stung as though an able-bodied wasp had alighted there.

"Ouch!" muttered Winder, giving his cheek a slap, whereat Jimmy laughed.

In an instant that jolly joker was spotted.

"Come out here, Grimes," cried the tutor, in a rage.

Jimmy marched up like a soldier to the cannon's mouth.

"What do you mean by shooting putty at me?" for Winder had discovered the nature of the missile projected at him.

"Didn't," said Jimmy.

"Then what made you laugh?"

"Something funny struck me."

"Oh, it did, eh? Well, something not so funny will strike you next. Hold out your hand."

"What for?" asked Jim, trying to temporize.

"For laughing without permission."

Jimmy extended his digits and Winder made a crack at them.

The young scamp wasn't holding his hand out for it to be thumped, however, and he hastily withdrew it.

Result: Winder gave his own leg a stunning cut that made him howl.

He had it in for James after that, and Jimmy got his jacket so well dusted that it might have been used for a table-cloth.

"Next!" cried he, as he started toward his seat.

"Whose turn is it after me?"

The boys laughed at this, and three or four of those nearest got some nice juicy cuts from that rattan of Winder's.

Will now let Winder have another crack on the back of the head as he turned, and then passed his shooter on to the next boy, who forwarded it to Jack.

Winder was hopping mad, and he stormed around like a bull at sight of a red petticoat.

Jack got a good chance to let him have it once more with the bean-shooter, which he then passed on to Power.

The boys were getting tired of being whaled for nothing, and were going to get even if they could.

However, Winder kept his eye on them, and for a time there was no disturbance.

Then Tommy fell asleep over in his corner and suddenly tumbled out of his seat, books and all, upon the floor, with a great clatter.

The room was as still as a church, and everybody was startled by the sudden commotion, most of all poor Tommy himself.

"What are you doing, Wright?" cried the master, petulantly.

"Nothing," said Tommy, greatly bewildered.

"You make noise enough about it, I hope. Come out here!" and Tommy had to take his second whack for that day.

Then Jack dropped a book upon going to his seat, and that meant a dose for him, so that by the time noon came around there wasn't a boy in the whole forty that hadn't been thrashed more or less by the wrathful Winder.

Not much was said at dinner-time, though the boys were thinking over their wrongs all the same, and wondering how to be avenged.

In the afternoon Winder was more cranky than ever, and made those boys very much tired.

If a boy hesitated for a second in answering a question, whack went the rattan across his back and nobody dared to look cross-eyed for fear of getting a belt.

Oh, it was just fairy land, with warbling birds and purling streams, and gentle zephyrs for those boys while Winder held the reins.

Jack sneezed and got two cuts for it, Jimmy coughed and had the same prescription, and then every boy in the room, of course, felt an uncontrollable desire to do one or the other.

Those that couldn't hold it got whacked, and those that tried to do so made all the more noise and got double doses.

The beloved Winder was as fidgety as an old maid

expecting a fellow to pop, and as nervous as a cat, and every time a boy moved he got on his auricular organ in a jiffy.

The boys were mad and they didn't care two pins now how much they teased and annoyed him.

When they left the room they banged the doors as though they had a spite against them, and at every bang Winder would jump as though he were going to have a first-class gilt edged fit.

Once when Jimmy went out he brought back a snowball, on the sly, and passed bits of it around among his cronies, and they pelted Winder when he wasn't looking.

He could hardly be expected to watch forty boys at once, and when he was looking at one side he would get a whack from the other.

Then the house-cat got into the room in some strange way, when the door was left open, though Walter could easily have explained that, and went scurrying around among the desks.

Somebody pulled her tail, and some one else trod on her foot, and there was a great hubbub and caterwauling in an instant.

Winder went to drive her out, when she jumped on the doctor's desk, upset the ink, and stained her white coat black, and finally, seeing no other way out, dashed through a pane of glass.

A more thoroughly disgusted, worn-out, cranky individual than Winder was when three o'clock came can hardly be imagined.

"If it wasn't for punishing myself more," he snarled, "I'd keep you all here till six o'clock. I never saw such a lot of stupid, ill-behaved, disorderly set of young imps in all my life. School is dismissed!"

But weren't the boys glad to get clear of their tyrant at last, notwithstanding the complimentary things he had said of them?

Well, we would just venture to remark, that's all.

They got out of that room, into their hats, coats and mufflers and out doors just as sudden as possible, and then proceeded to let off steam.

"Bah!" went up the chorus, just under the windows of the main school-room.

Winder appeared and shook his fist at them, when somebody fired a snowball through the hole pussy had made in her mad flight.

The pedagogue got the full benefit of it, and then the whole gang dusted, and the ball-tosser could not be identified.

"Haven't we had a daisy day of it?" remarked Jimmy, when he and his chums were off by themselves.

"Never had so much fun since I broke my nose," remarked Jack.

"Wouldn't mind that sort of business every day, provided I had a tin jacket," put in Harry.

"Winder just licks the sugar off the bun, for a gentle disposition," observed Walter.

"He's a sweet little daisy on a mossy bank," commented Will.

"More like a pig-weed on a rubbish heap," snorted Tommy.

"Your language may be classical, my dear Tommy," said Jimmy, with a laugh, "but it's hardly elegant."

"Don't care if it isn't. I'd like to slug him and bury him in an ash barrel," cried Fatty, indignantly.

"Sacred to the memory of the dear departed," chuckled Jack. "How nice it would look."

"We might give him a hint that he had better go and bury himself," observed Jimmy.

"Let's dig him a grave in a snow-bank!"

"Or in a nice, sweet smelling ditch, only they're all frozen up."

"Let's put up a snow monument right in front of his window and stick his name on it."

"Let's roll a big snowball on him and bury him decently and quietly."

They all had something to suggest, but Jimmy piped his little pipe, and said:

"Order in the court! Listen to my remarks, brother victims."

Then everybody knew that something very fine and large was coming, and they all bottled up their lips.

"Give it to us straight," said Jack. "What's your little amusement, James?"

"We'll fix him up a nice little snowy mound right here in front of the door step, and when he comes out he'll walk right into it."

"H'm! he'd kick it over."

"Let him try it, my sweet cousin."

"Well, how are you going to fix it?"

"Bricks, my dear."

"Where are you going to get 'em?"

"In the subterranean vaults of this educational establishment, usually denominated the cellar."

"That's so, that's immense."

There was a pile of bricks in the cellar that had been left over from some repairs about the place, and the boys had often noticed them.

Thither they repaired at once, and brought away a dozen or more of the red-headed clay slabs and dumped them in front of the stoop.

Then they proceeded to make a neat little structure of the overdone clay biscuits right in front of the door.

Having formed the base of their mound, they covered it over with snow, rounding off the top neatly, so that it looked like a snow-clad grave in a quiet country churchyard.

"That's boss," whispered Jack. "Now for the inscription."

Jimmy then got a big card, a brush and some ink and printed the following:

HERE LIES WINDER,

Our Dearly Beloved Instructor.

Et Him R-I-P!

"How's that for away up?" he remarked, as he stuck the card on the mound.

"Bully!" cried all the boys.

"Now, then, let's evacuate."

Then the boys faded away, managing, however, to keep where they could see all the fun that might go on and yet not be too closely observed themselves.

Pretty soon the door opened, and out stepped Winder, arrayed for his afternoon promenade.

He had on a big fur cap, a long woolen muffler, overshoes that might have passed muster as small trunks, and white yarn mittens.

He was feeling as sour as a swill barrel, and when he saw that grave and its head-stone he was mad enough to kick himself.

He scowled as black as an iron pot, raised one of his big feet, spread out his hands and prepared to kick that bit of mockery before him out of existence.

He was going to have lots of fun sweeping that thing from his path, and he actually laughed as he poised his gigantic foot over it.

However, he laughs best who waits till the other fellow gets through with his laugh.

PART XIV.

WHEN Winder started to kick over that snowy grave which the boys had put up in his memory he fancied he was going to have lots of fun.

When he got through the kick act he found that the fun was on the other side of the fence.

That mound looked innocent enough on the surface.

Beneath it was a mass of deceit and trickery—like-wise bricks.

Away went the bricks in all directions, and over went the nice little headboard the boys had set up.

Winder felt, however, as if his toes had been trod on by forty mules.

He dropped down on the snow, grabbed his foot and grated his teeth in first-class agony.

The bricks hadn't minded that kick a cent's worth, but Winder's toes had.

As the very much surprised and indignant teacher sat there hugging his foot, grinding his teeth and uttering naughty words, the boys suddenly appeared around the corner of the house.

They were all as innocent as so many marble cherubs kicking up their heels over a gateway.

Sympathy was just bubbling over in their young bosoms, and they put it on tap at once.

"What's the matter, Mr. Winder?"

"Fall down and step on your foot?"

"Did you hurt yourself very bad?"

"Is there anything we can do for you?"

"Do you want some arnica?"

"Shall I go for a doctor?"

"Will you have a cab?"

"Where does it hurt you most?"

Everybody had something to advise or suggest, or inquire about or recommend, or to express sympathy about or to give information on, and the remarks made were as numerous as the styles of spring bonnets.

Everybody was as sober as a little deacon, and no one would have thought that they had had a hand in the racket.

They were all as respectful, as anxious, as solicitous, as eager to do something as though they had been sweet little missionaries all their lives.

In their minds, they were, and Winder took a tumble.

"Get out, you young imps," he roared, getting on his feet, "or I'll make a slaughter-house of this place in ten seconds."

He could not say positively that these boys had worked the job up on him, but he knew they were capable of doing it.

"Does it hurt you much?" asked Jack.

"Did you fall far?" put in Jim.

"Do you want an ambulance?" queried Harry.

"When did it happen?" interrogated Walter.

Oh, they were as respectful a lot of boys as one could find outside of a Sunday-school.

But Winder knew they were giving him the grand guy all the time, and it did not improve the natural sweetness and affability of his temper.

"Get out!" he howled, making a break.

The boys stepped aside, and Winder tripped over a brick and came down on his hands and knees in the snow.

"Oh!" cried all the boys in deeply sympathetic tones.

"I'll owe you!" yelled that enraged rattan-handler, as he jumped up.

Rage, they say, wears spectacles, but this time he had forgotten them, and so he was as blind as a bat.

The rage in that pedagogue's bosom made him careless of things adjacent, and when he started up and after the boys he ran slam bang into the side of the house.

The house got the best of it, and Winder went down with dispatch, if not a great degree of neatness.

"Ah!" said all the boys in chorus once more.

That made the expounder of knowledge very mad, and he rushed at the crowd like a wild bull.

The boys got out of his way, however, and had lots of fun laughing over the picture he had made after kicking the insides out of that snow-covered grave in front of the stoop.

But Winder was bound to get even on somebody, if the boys had eluded him, and so he started off with blood in his eye and a brick in his fist, thirsting for vengeance.

He caught up one of the bricks that had caused him to take such a tumble, and made a bee line for the road.

The first person he saw was Clarence, the dude having just left the building.

The dizzy young fellow had his back to the angry

professor, and was walking leisurely along smoking a cigar.

He kept his eyes peeled in front of him, for he feared that some of the boys might be laying for him with snowballs.

He did not think of looking out behind, having no fear of trouble coming from that quarter.

Consequently Winder had come up with him before he heard the sound of his big overshoes on the loose snow.

"I'll teach you," muttered Winder, as he let fly with the brick at Clarence's back.

Fortunately for Clarence, the professor slipped in the very act of throwing the missile.

The latter flew past the astonished dude as he turned, doing no more damage than knocking his stick out of his hand.

"Ta-ta, old chapple," laughed Clarence, as he walked off. "Go get some plain sodah and wub you head. You'll feel bettah when you have your din-nah."

In spite of Clarence's prediction, however, Winder did not feel any better, but worse than before.

When the boys assembled at table that evening Winder presided in the absence of the doctor, and assumed all the dignity he could command.

Mrs. Guff, with brand new ribbons in her cap and a big white apron on, came in when all were seated, and placed a big tureen in front of the professor.

"Mock turtle soup," she whispered, "and very fine, too. Don't give the boys too much, and then there will be more for you and me."

Winder smiled a sort of sickly smile, for he did not

"Smoke!" cried Mrs. Guff angrily, and the little ducky appeared quickly in answer to her summons.

"How did that brick get into the tureen?" and Mrs. Guff raised it up into view.

"Donno, missus, 'less 'twas put in to wahm de dish."

"Be Jove, ye know, I nevah hawd of a tuween hav-ing a bwick in its hat befaw," muttered Clarence, who had not noticed the first appearance of the "mock turtle."

"Jones, did you do that?" demanded Winder with a snarl.

"Mistah Jones, if you please," answered Clarence.

"Well, Mr. Jones, do you know anything about this brick?"

"I wathah fahney that you know maw about bwicks than I, swom yaw appeahwance this aftah-



Away went the bricks in all directions, and over went the nice little headboard the boys had set up. Winder felt, however, as if his toes had been trod on by forty mules. He flopped down on the snow, grabbed his foot and grated his teeth in first class agony. The bricks hadn't minded that kick a cent's worth, but Winder's shoes had.

Winder sprawled out on the snow at Clarence's feet, and the dude took a look at him through his quizzing glass.

"Aw, vevy funny," observed Clarence. "He must have lost that bwick out of his hat, be Jove. It's vevy sad to see a man so fond of dwink that he cah'n't stand up, don't ye know?"

"What do you mean by that, you fool?" demanded Winder, getting up.

"Why, it's vevy cleah that you have been dwinking, me deah fellah," returned Clarence, ignoring the compliment to himself.

"You're another," snapped Winder.

"It's all wight, me deah fellah, as long as the doc-tah doesn't know it, but I wouldn't let the boys see you in such a state, don't ye know."

"What sort of a state, you idiot?"

"In a state of dwunkenness, me deah boy, faw you aw intoxicated, you know, you aw weally. Bettah go to bed and get ovah it befaw dinnah."

"Do you dare insinuate that I am drunk?" roared Winder, madder than ever.

"Why, yas, my deah saw, and theah is the bwick in yaw hat," and Clarence pointed to the object that had carried away his stick, which, by the way, he had recovered.

Then that nobby dude walked on, leaving Winder in a state of speechless indignation.

To be called drunk by a dude was worse than being kicked by a jackass, but there was no redress, and that made it harder to bear.

Clarence was a hitter from Slugetown, and Winder knew it and had no desire to have a round with him, and consequently had to bear the dude's jeering remarks in patience.

altogether relish Guffy's attentions, and uncovered the dish.

Then Smoke put a pile of soup plates in front of him, and the waitresses stood in a line on one side to convey the dishes to the boys as fast as they were filled.

Winder dipped in his ladle clear to the bottom and then essayed to lift it, but it wouldn't come up.

"Seems to me the whole turtle must be at the bot-tom," he muttered, "and he's caught the ladle."

Then he made a big effort, and up came the giant spoon with a queer object resting on its bowl.

A brick!

The ladle had gone under it, owing to the convexity of the dish, and it came to the surface.

"Great Scott!" muttered Winder, forgetting that slang was not taught at Dr. Bircham's.

Then he suddenly let the brick slip from the ladle, and down it went into the dish with a splash.

The hot soup flew up and splattered Winder's full shirt front, some of it likewise catching the head waitress on the cheek.

"Ow!" she yelled, jumping back and coming down flat-footed on the toes of the girl behind.

The latter lost her balance and fell against the maid just in the rear, and then the whole gang went down like a row of bricks.

"Who put that brick in the soup?" demanded Guff angrily.

Nobody volunteered any information, though smiles circulated all around the board.

"Do you call a brick a mock turtle?" demanded Winder.

"There's too much mockery altogether. Take it away."

noon," replied Clarence. "Pawhaps you made the soup and the bwick dwopped swom yaw hat into the tuween."

Then there was a laugh all around the table, and Winder got as red as a bunch of beets.

"Take it away," he stormed, and Guff was so surprised that she let the offending brick fall plump into the tureen, and Winder got another hot soup bath.

The soup was taken away, and then a stuffed shoulder of veal came in, and was set in front of Winder to carve.

He jabbed in his big carving fork and drew the knife across the joint, going down deep, when suddenly a grating sound was heard.

"What's this shoulder stuffed with, Mrs. Gough?" demanded Winder.

"Sage and onions and bread crumbs, celery, parsley, sweet herbs—"

"And bricks!" hissed Winder, who had been slashing away at the meat, and now revealed a brick-bat stowed into the opening usually reserved for a more savory filling.

"Oh, Lord!" and Guff nearly went into a spasm.

"I've had all the bricks I want," growled Winder. "If you have anything else for dinner, you can send it up to my room."

Then he got up in wrath, overturned his chair, and swept out of the room in majestic indignation.

Guffy was mad, but no amount of investigation could solve the problem as to how the bricks came on the table.

The cook was summoned, but she protested entire ignorance of the matter, and was willing to stake her reputation that she had not put the offending objects into the dishes.

Smoke knew no more than the cook, and the waitresses, knife-cleaners, butler and pantry man knew still less.

However, the dinner was found to be palatable enough, and as Winder was not present to take away their appetites with his sour looks, the boys managed to make an excellent meal.

Winder was mad enough to kick himself, and the next day, when the doctor appeared, the professor made a formal complaint against the boys in general.

He told of the many tricks that had been played upon him, and declared that he would leave if matters went on as they had been going for some time.

"I am afraid you do not try to obtain the good will of the young gentlemen," said the worthy doctor. "However, I suspect that there is too much mischief going on, and it must be stopped."

In the afternoon the doctor announced that all tricks and practical jokes in the school must cease, and that upon their recurrence the offender would be expelled.

Things were quiet for a time after this, but at last a log of wood was found in Winder's bed one night, arrayed in one of the professor's night shirts and having a comical mask fastened on for a head.

Dan Lockwood, one of the unpopular boys of the school, and a lazy, bullying fellow to boot, was accused of perpetrating the joke, having been seen loitering around the corridors after hours, and he was at once sent away from the school in disgrace.

The school could well get rid of him, and it ought to have done so before, but, as a matter of fact, he was entirely innocent of the offense charged against him.

He was expelled, for all that, and rather enjoyed the reputation the thing gave him, which fact took away any qualms of conscience which the real authors of the snap, our friends Jack and Jim, might have had over his expulsion.

Other tricks followed and other boys were expelled, but it always happened that the weeding out was among the very class of boys that could be the easiest spared, while the better boys remained.

About this time our friend Clarence Fitz Roy Jones, having given up his suit of the pretty Susie Marble, began devoting his attention to mental philosophy, physics and other abstruse subjects, with a view to improving what little mind he had.

One day Clarence came across the following extract in a newspaper, which greatly interested him:

"An affection or even a disease of the brain may be often relieved, if not cured, by a sudden shock or fright, and even by a severe blow, upon the principle of counter-irritants, the shock taking the strain from the parts affected and taking it to another which is too active, thus equalizing the pressure of cerebral matter."

Clarence did not catch on to the whole business exactly, but he did understand that a sudden shock or fright would often relieve brain troubles.

His own brain did not trouble him much, to be sure, but then he was just now interested in all mental questions and willing to investigate them.

Shortly after reading the extract he left his room to go out, and as he went down-stairs he began to sing.

He had often imagined he had a musical voice, but had never had much chance to exercise it, owing to the difference of opinion entertained by the boys upon the subject.

Jack and Jim had told him that he had no more voice than a crow, and had requested him to go and bottle himself up on several occasions when he had attempted to entertain them with his melody.

As he reached the lower hall, when just in the midst of "You'll Remember Me," Smoke came hurrying along, his fingers on his lips.

"What is the mattah, my Afwican fwient?" asked Clarence, putting the brakes on his ballad.

"Sh, don' yo' make so much racket, Marse Clarence," whispered Smoke.

"Wacket, me deah fellah!" cried Clarence in surprise. "Why, that was singing, my young fwient."

"Kean't help it, Marse Clarence, it make a noise, an' de missus say she couldn' stand it nohow wif her sick headache."

"Aw, has the housekeepah a sick headache, Smoke?"

"Yas'r, she am took dres'l bad, an' she am layin' down in de settin'-room tryin' to keep quiet."

"Why don't she do something faw her headache?"

"She done try ebery'ing, but 'tain't no use 'tall, an' now she jes' wants to keep quiet. Reckon ef she wouldn't talk so much she'd do bettah."

"Let me see," mused Clarence, as he walked along the hall, Smoke having departed, "what is the cause of headaches?"

"The bwain is in the head, and if the head aches the bwain must ache, too, and that's where the twouble is."

"Baw Jove, don't ye know heah is a chaunce to twy the cowectness of the theowy I have just wead!"

"A sick headache is an affection of the bwain, and a bwain twouble may be cuahed by a sudden shock aw fwight, so the papah says."

"Egad, me deah boy, I'll twy the wemedey, and if it succeeds the housekeepah will give me her etawnal gwatitude, and bettah foddah, pawhaps, in the bargain."

When once an idea did get into that dude's head he lost no time until he carried it out.

Here was a chance to test this newly-discovered theory, do a fellow-creature a kindness, and feather his own nest besides.

The opportunity was not to be let slip by any means.

What to do was plain enough, but how to do it was not so easy to determine.

Clarence hit upon a plan at last, and he wondered that he had not thought of it before.

Returning to his room without making as much noise as would disturb a snoozing weasel, the dude went at once to the top drawer of his dressing-case and took out a revolver.

Among other foolish things he had done since coming to the doctor's, Clarence had deemed it necessary to purchase a six-shooter, to use in case of an emergency.

He had no more use for the weapon than a Hottentot belle has for a fur-lined circular, but he thought he might have, and that settled it.

He had only used the pop once or twice surreptitiously, and then somebody had complained of the racket, since which time it had been put away in cotton, safe from observation.

Now, however, the opportunity had come to use it, as well as to put his theory in practice.

Carefully loading his miniature Gatling, and concealing it under his waistcoat, Clarence returned noiselessly to the lower hall.

The sitting-room was at the further end, opposite the front door, and was only used when the parents or friends of the boys called to see them.

When Clarence reached the room he found the door ajar, and he pushed it open quietly and looked in.

Mrs. Guff was lying on the sofa asleep, having at last succeeded in getting a nap.

The place was darkened, but there was still light enough to enable Clarence to take in the surroundings.

The house cat lay dozing on one side of the fireplace, while the dog snoozed quietly, just opposite, a big, green parrot in a cage on the mantel, sitting silently on his perch.

Everything was quiet and peaceful, and in the semi-darkness of the place there reigned the most perfect tranquillity.

Clarence stole in on tiptoe, and crouched behind the sofa, which had been drawn out somewhat from the wall.

Presently Mrs. Guff groaned and moved uneasily in her sleep.

This was the opportunity which Clarence had sought for.

Now was the time to come in heavy on the sudden shock.

Raising his right arm, that dizzy dude suddenly fired in the air, right over Guff's head.

Bang! bang! bang! bang!

Four shots rang out one after the other in quick succession, startling the echoes and bringing Guff to her feet as quick as greased lightning.

"Fire!" yelled the frightened housekeeper, that being the first thing she ever thought of in case of any sudden alarm.

"Me-ow, psst-reow!" cried the cat, getting her back up in an instant.

"Wow-wow!" barked the dog, jumping up and making for puss, whom he judged to be the cause of his sudden awaking.

"Hallo, who's that?" squawked the parrot, nearly falling off his perch.

Then Clarence fired two more shots, one going through a window and the other passing through Polly's cage, and nearly beheading that interesting bird.

"Murder, thieves, fire!" yelled Guff, going off into a fit of hysterics and tumbling backwards on the sofa.

The sudden shock snapped one of the legs off short, and the whole thing went over backwards and pinned poor Clarence to the floor.

His experiment might have taken away the housekeeper's headache, but it had not resulted very satisfactorily to himself.

PART XV.

THE shots fired by Clarence had aroused the whole house.

The barking of the dog, the music of the cat, the shrieks of Polly, the screams of Guff and the agonized yells of poor Clarence quickly located the scene of the disturbance.

Dr. Bircham, Messrs. Winder, Root, Hodson and all the other instructors, the cook, butler, pantryman, waiting-girls, Smoke and about twenty of the boys hurried to the spot.

When they arrived Guff was going into her third spasm, the dog was having a battle royal with the cat, and Polly was yelling "Fire" and laughing at the top of her voice.

"What is all this noise about?" asked the doctor.

"I'm cwushed, let me out!" bawled Clarence.

"Guff has got a mash on the dude," remarked Jimmy.

"And a solid mash at that," added Jack. "He won't be likely to get over it very soon."

"Take it off; I'm being gwound to powdah," yelled Clarence.

Winder picked up Guff, Root and Hodson lifted the sofa, and Jack and Jim pulled Clarence upon his feet.

"Oh, deah, I can scawcely bwathe," sighed Clarence. "I do believe my shawt-studs are gwound wight into my bwest-bone, I do weally."

"Get a crowbar and pry them up."

"If it wasn't for your shirt getting soiled," laughed Jim. "you might leave them there, Clarence. Save the trouble of changing them, you know."

"But, me deah fellah, I cahn't weah the same style of studs all the time, ye know. Suppose they should go out of fashion?"

"That would be awful."

"What was all the trouble about, anyhow?" asked Root. "Who fired those shots?"

"I did," said Clarence.

"What for?"

"Faw an expewiment."

"In seeing how crooked you could shoot?"

"No, sah, but to welieve the housekeeper's headache."

"Oh, you brute!" snapped Mrs. Guff. "Is that the way to do it, half frighten a person to death?"

"What was your idea?" asked Jack.

"Why, I hawd that a sudden fwight would cuah an affection of the bwain, don't ye know, and so I flahed my pistol."

There was a grand laugh at this, and the doctor, smiling in spite of himself, said:

"You no doubt had a very good excuse, sir, but pray try your experiments outside the house after this."

"Yas, sah," said Clarence.

"What a fool," snapped Guff.

"That's just like Clarence," laughed Jack.

"Only he's improving," added Jim. "He never used to think at all."

Poor Clarence did not get the satisfaction he supposed he would out his of scientific experiment, and the laughter of the boys rather galled him.

He was bound to know what the result had been, however, and so, turning to the housekeeper, he said:

"Aw, may I inqual if yaw head feels any bettah, me deah madam?"

"If I had your head I'd never be troubled with headaches," snapped the irate Guff. "People with no brains never have 'em."

"Then I wondah that you should be twoubled that way," retorted Clarence, not to be beaten in polite repartee by a mere housekeeper.

"Bah, you're a fool!" snapped Guff, as she flounced out of the room, leaving forever in doubt the question whether or no her headache had been cured by Clarence's experiment in natural philosophy.

The dude pocketed his gun and retired to escape the jests of the boys, who had something to laugh at for the rest of the week.

The next night there was a commotion in the house, and the cause thereof was Tommy Wright.

During the day Professor Winder had interviewed him with a trunk strap on account of his having forgotten to learn his lesson.

Tommy had studied the wrong one, knew it by heart, and was willing to recite it in order to prove the truth of his assertion, but that did not suit Winder, and he whaled Tommy instead.

The fat boy thirsted for revenge, and all the morning was trying to think of some good plan by which to obtain it.

He did not take any one into his confidence, for he wanted to have the revenge act all to himself, nothing but the whole thing being able to sate his vengeful greed.

That afternoon, when school was over, he went off down to the village, overtaking Jimmy in front of one of the stores.

"Hallo, Skinny, going to the ball match?" saluted James.

"No, I ain't; I'm going to buy something to make a rabbit house."

"How many do you want, I'd like to know?"

"What's that to you?" and Tommy walked into the store.

"Give me some tacks," he asked of the gentlemanly and obliging clerk.

"What size?"

"Small ones."

"You can't fasten slats on your cage with those things," said Jimmy, who had followed Tommy into the store.

The tacks in question were little bits of fellows, used in fastening gimp on furniture.

"I guess I know what I want," snapped Tommy. "Give me two papers of 'em," to the clerk.

"Anything else?"

"No."

"Why don't you get brada, Tommy?" asked Jimmy. "You can't do anything with those undergrown tacks."

"I know what I want as well as you do," snapped Tommy, as he dropped the two papers of infant tacks into a side pocket.

Jimmy made no more suggestions or inquiries, and it soon became obvious that Master Tommy wished to shake him.

Our young gentleman thought this was rather funny, for, as a rule, Tommy preferred his company to that of anybody.

However, Jimmy had no particular objection to being shaken by the obese Thomas, and so he hied himself away to other parts, and left Tommy to himself.

Now Master Tommy knew well enough that those little tacks were no more fit for nailing slats upon his rabbit cage than tenpenny nails would have been.

In fact, he did not want them for that purpose at all, but for quite another.

A quarter-inch tack was just the thing for his purpose, and that was why he got it, being wiser in his generation than people sometimes supposed.

"I might have got carpet tacks," he muttered when he had got clear of Jimmy, "but they're easier to find, and you can't have so much fun with 'em."

That evening, after supper, Master Tom stole upstairs to Winder's room, and literally sowed the floor with the tiny tacks he had purchased.

Then he sneaked out with a grin and a chuckle and joined the boys at their studies without having been missed.

That night when Winder went to undress for the night he had a first-rate surprise party.

He started to go across the room in his stocking feet, when he gave a jump and a howl, and then sat down with swiftness and elegance.

He had stepped on one of those unripe tacks, hence his spasms.

He sat down on another, and quickly changed his position.

Then he pulled the tack out of his sock and started off on the second lap.

Two steps more and he ran three of the emoryo spikes into each foot.

"Great guns! are there any more of 'em?" he ejaculated.

Then he sat down on a chair and got rid of his torrents, glancing down on the floor so see if there were any more in sight.

The light glistened on one a step or so away, and the professor went down on his knees to pick it up.

He suddenly wished he had not, and the wish was expressed in language more to the point than remarkable for grace of diction.

go tramping around on some more of those plentifully distributed tacks till he thought he should go wild.

"Great Scott! how many more of 'em are there?" he bawled, jumping up on the sofa.

The noise had aroused the house, and in came Smoke in his bare feet, sent up by Mrs. Guff to see if the house were on fire or what.

"What am de mattah, mistah? Owl!" and Smoke began to perform an African hornpipe.

Then Mr. Root entered, bent on obtaining information.

"Do you know, sir, that you are creating a great—Thunder and blazes! what's that?"

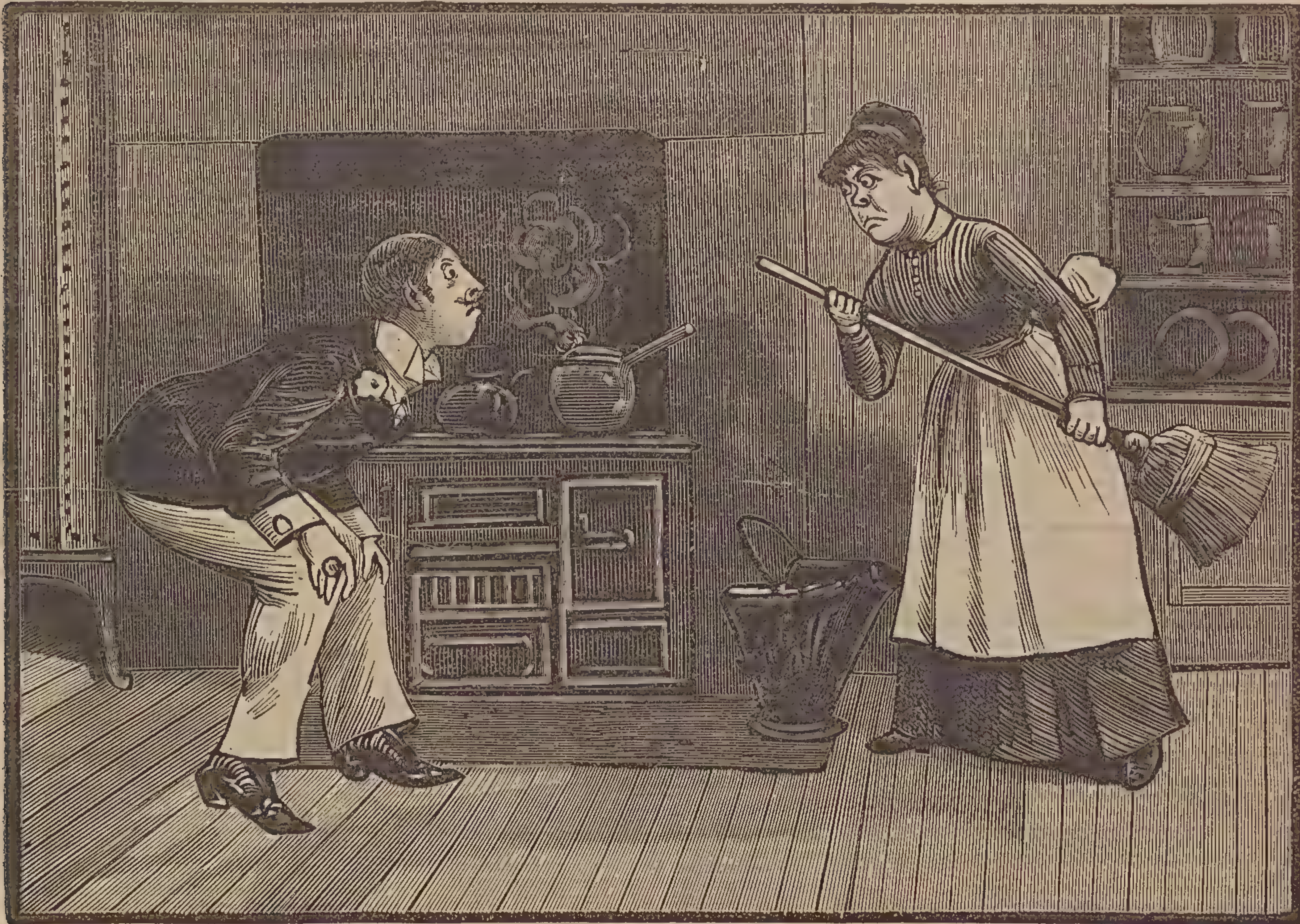
He too had neglected to put on his slippers, and was

to get tacks in his feet at the most inopportune moments, causing him to use very appropriate but not very nice language, until at last he got into the habit of getting into bed with his slippers on, and then dropping them out from the side after he was safe in bed.

Winder did his best to find out how those little tacks came in his room, but the only ones that knew would not tell, and the poor tutor had finally to give it up as one of those things which no fellow can find out.

One day, after the tack racket had been forgotten, Jack and Jim were down in the town one clear, cold winter afternoon, seeing the sights.

"Get onto Jumbo's ghost, Jack," said Jimmy, presently, as they passed in front of a butcher's shop.



By degrees the cook got more and more astonished, and then she began to get her mad up and return the dude's look with interest. "The powah is beginning to work," thought Clarence. "Just a little moah and the victory will be won. Gweat is the powah of mind ovah mattah!"

"Saints and sinners! fire and brimstone! has it been raining tacks in this place?"

Well might he ask it, for he could not take a step without getting nipped.

Then he tried picking them up and went down on his marrow bones once more.

Those he saw were all right, but sometimes he would not see them, and then it was not so pleasant.

The little things stuck to his fingers, his toes, and his flesh, and if he had kept on much longer he would have had as many bristles as a porcupine.

"Confound that careless housekeeper," he sputtered, starting for the wash-stand to wipe the blood off his finger where a tack had stuck in.

As he lifted the pitcher to pour out some water, he shifted his right foot.

It immediately alighted on an undiscovered tack, standing on its head waiting for a victim.

"Owl! ouch! jumping rattlesnakes!"

Bang!

Thud!

Splash!

Up jumped the professor, and down fell the pitcher. It wasn't built for such rough usage, and it broke in a dozen pieces.

Over the floor went the water in rivulets.

"Gosh!" muttered Winder, in no gentle tones.

Then he flew to save the pieces, and stuck his foot in a puddle of water.

"Ugh! good fathers, jiminy horsedyl! ain't that water cold—ow!"

Then in jumping out of the way he upset a chair, knocked a little clock off the mantel, fell against the window, clutched wildly at the air and yanked down one of the curtains, fixtures and all, besides doing other damage too numerous to mention.

After all that he was not satisfied, but must needs

lucky enough to step on a sneaking little tack hidden away in the nap of the carpet.

Then Hodson came in in his dressing-gown and slippers to investigate the cause of the racket.

He was all right until he got down to pick up a tack which Winder pointed out to him, and then he had to kneel on another, and things began to get hilarious.

The excitement spread, and soon all the instructors, the doctor, a dozen boys, and half the servants in the place were in that room trying to find out what the fuss was all about.

Those who had not taken the trouble to put on shoes or slippers found out pretty quick.

There were half a dozen of them dancing the Highland fling, together, and there could not have been more noise made if it had been an Irish wake or a darky cake walk.

"Get out of here!" yelled Winder, securing his slippers by reaching over from the sofa, thereby nearly losing his balance.

Then the crowd scattered, though the housekeeper insisted that she could smell smoke, and that some one ought to turn on the hose.

All this was fun for Tommy, who had taken it in from the start and felt a great deal better now that he had paid Winder up.

Jimmy tumbled to the little racket when he saw Root pick a juvenile nail out from between his toes, and he rewarded Tommy with a benevolent smile.

"So that was his new rabbit cage, eh?" he mused.

"Pretty good for Thomas; he isn't as big a dunce as some people take him to be."

Winder got to bed at last and the house was quiet, but Tommy did not get to sleep for an hour for laughing over the success of his trick.

The next day Winder's room was swept, but for three or four nights afterward the professor continued

"Yes, sir, and there's a daisy chance for a racket, too."

Just in front of them was a big fat farmer who weighed fully two hundred pounds and who was waddling along like a duck with a game leg.

He had but lately come out of the butcher's, and in a side pocket of his big, shaggy overcoat was stuck a package which more than filled the receptacle.

In fact, it boiled over, so to speak, and by the looks of things, the paper being worn away on top, contained sausages.

The big fellow was evidently taking home home his next day's breakfast, and was so anxious to have enough that it overflowed his pocket.

Pretty soon the countryman stopped to look in at a window, and then Jack approached cautiously, knife in hand.

A few dexterous movements served to cut through the paper, loosen the end sausage on the string and leave it hanging over the side of the man's pocket.

"You'll see some fun presently," observed Jack, as he stepped aside and pointed to a dog that was coming leisurely up the street.

"Yes, if his instincts are cannibalistic," added Jim.

"Oh, he looks as if he'd eat anything he could get his teeth in."

He was, indeed, a hungry-looking brute, his ribs standing out in bold relief, and his eyes having a wary look as though he were always on the watch for a good free lunch route.

The old fellow had not finished his examination of the wonders in that shop window when along came this kl-yelper and scented the dangling sausage.

He was a bold, bad bandit dog, and he instantly licked that sausage and tried to make off with it.

But that link of chopped meat concluded not to be

a missing link just then and it held on to its fellows.

The jerk attracted the granger's attention, however, and he turned about quickly to see what was going on.

"Hallo! thieves, police, burglars!" he yelled.

The dog got out of the way, but as the old fellow could see no suspicious characters lurking around, he went on his way, without thinking to look in his side pocket, though he felt in all the rest.

That sooner pup had had a taste of sausage, however, and he wasn't giving up the chase so soon if he knew it.

He sneaked after the rural member, made a dart at that sausage, got a firm grip on it and bolted.

This time he got away with it, and, better than that, with the whole batch.

The paper flew off and the string of sausages dragged out behind that fleeing dog like the tail of a kite.

"Steady advance in sausages," laughed Jack.

"Pork exceedingly lively by latest market reports," chimed in Jim.

"Great activity in provisions."

"Hog's meat getting away out of reach."

The owner of those sausages did not feel like making any facetious remarks over the disappearance of his breakfast, but started in hot pursuit.

He was too fat to be very antelopish in his speed, and he soon began to puff like a steam engine, the sweat running off him in torrents.

"Stop thief!" he bawled, making his fat legs go as fast as possible, which was not saying much.

However, there were others that were as much interested in the chase as he was.

These were three or four dogs with nothing to do and less to eat, who had espied the runaway and his edible burden.

After him they put, in a brace of shakes, determined to get some of the plunder at any risk.

They were good-sized dogs, fleet of foot and strong of wind, and they soon ran down the robber dog.

Then what a racket there was in the canine community.

The original thief got away with the first sausage he had prigged, and that was all.

A market was found for the others so quick that there wasn't a whole sausage lying around loose inside of half a minute.

Such tumbling and scrambling and snapping and snarling and pulling and hauling and growling was never heard outside of a college football match.

"There goes the old man's breakfast," laughed Jim.

It was gone, in fact, by the time the old codger reached the pack of fighting dogs and began laying about him with his heavy cane.

Everybody laughed and thought it was jolly fun, but the old man was mad enough to chew pig iron.

"I'd kill every gosh darned dog in town if I had my way," he growled, rapping away at those kidoodles and giving them his kind regards at the end of his stick.

They had had sausage, but they didn't care for stake, and so they dusted, while the old man began grumbling to himself, evidently trying to reckon up how much money he had in his clothes.

He was diving down in his breeches pockets, when Jack came up, held out a silver dollar and said:

"That belongs to you, sir, I think. Didn't you lose it when the dog ran away with your sausages?"

"Did I?" muttered the old fellow, doubtfully.

"I think you did, and I am quite sure it belongs to you," and Jack dropped the money into the man's big pocket and dusted, saying to Jim:

"I didn't suppose he was going to lose the whole string, and it's too bad. Ahyhow, I don't care now, for he can buy some more, and it was worth a dollar to see the fun those bruisers had with that chain of pig's meat."

The boys enjoyed the snap, and when they returned told it to their particular chums, who laughed till they cried over it.

Just about this time our friend Clarence had another adventure, which resulted from his researches in mental philosophy and other abstruse subjects.

"It's vewy singlar," he observed to himself one day, after reading an article in the village paper, "that the powah of the human eye should be so wemawkable. I wondah if it weally is? This fellah heah says that a glawnce of the human eye will fwighten the fiercest wild beast, if you only keep it steady and don't wayah."

"Only fancy a fellah stawing a tighaw a lion out of countenance, baw Jove, and making the howid cweachaws put thelah tails between thelah legs and wun away with feah. It must be awfully funny, don't ye know, if a fellah had the nawve to twy it on."

"I wondah if it is weally so, and that if a fellah stalaws a wild beast aw a big bad man wight in the eye saw a long time he would weally wun away? I'd weally like to see it twied."

"Suppose the othah fellah should twy to stalaw you down, what would be the wesult, I'd like to know? Awfully funny to see which gave in fawst, baw Jove."

"Howevah, this fellah says that the eye of a supe-wiah pawson is strongah than that of an ordinawy pawson, and that the will powah assists the eye to subdue the othah fellah. Baw Jove! I'd like to see if I could influence a pawson by looking at them with all my might, don't ye know, and weally pwove what this fellah says. There is so much wubbish in books nowadays, don't ye know. Let me see who I could twy the experiment on. I don't like the housekeepah; she is too stwong-minded, and I'm awfald she might chawm me instead of my chawming her, and wun off with me. I shawn't pwactice on Jimmy nor Jack,

because they are fwiends of mine, but I might twy some of the othah boys, only they aw too smawt. Aw, be Jove! I'll take an easy one to stawt on, and show the powah of the human eye to chawm and mesmewize a pawson of little culchaw, and aifah that I'll twy a hawdah subject, don't ye know."

Eager to test the power of his eye as a mesmerizer and see whether its influence was strong enough or not to subdue and bring under a spell the person upon whom he should fix a steady gaze, Clarence went down-stairs.

He was gotten up in his nobblest style, and looked as if he had just been taken out of a drawer.

Fortune favored him, for, as he walked past the kitchen door, he saw the cook standing in the middle of the room with a broom in her hand.

The presiding genius of the kitchen had well observed the time-honored rule that a cook should be fat, and she was a regular stunner in point of weight.

She was big and fat and good-natured, not over intelligent, and yet just the boss hash manipulator, and the boys were all in love with the grub she got up.

"The vewy pawson to twy fawst," muttered Clarence. "It couldn't be bettah if I had awanged it be-fawhand."

Now Clarence would illustrate the mysterious power of the eye of a cultured being over a person of lesser intellect.

Approaching to within four or five feet, Clarence suddenly halted and looked fixedly at the cook.

At first she did not mind it, though it was rather strange to see the dude in such a place, but when Clarence tried to rivet his gaze upon her, she began to get uneasy.

"And phat is the dood lukin' at?" she muttered. "Phat roight has a little whipper-shnappar like him to be shitarin' at a leddy loike me?"

But Clarence continued to stare with all his might at the buxom cook.

He stooped down, put his hands on his knees, and shot a double-barreled, extra power glance at the astonished domestic.

"Faix, is it wild ye are?" she demanded. "Begob, don't ye luk at me loike that."

But Clarence never said a say, only increasing the length, breadth, and thickness of his stare, which enveloped the cook like a blanket.

Now he would show what magic the eye possessed when all its strange influence was brought to bear upon a subject.

The longer Clarence stared, the more astonished the cook became, particularly as Clarence would vouchsafe no explanation, but continued to gaze with all his might.

It was a regular stony stare, one of the kind you read of in books, that transfix you and all that, and make you feel as if you had stepped on a tack or eaten too much ice-cream.

It was a regular dandy of a gaze, it was, but somehow or other it did not seem to work quite right.

By degrees the cook got more and more astonished, and then she began to get her mad up and return the dude's look with interest.

"The powah is beginning to work," thought Clarence. "Just a little moah and the victowy will be won. Gweat is the powah of mind ovah mattah!"

PART XVI.

CLARENCE stared at the cook, and the cook looked indignantly at Clarence.

The dude's experiment was working first-rate, and he was beginning to see the wonderful power of the human eye when influenced by reason, over a person of low intellect.

Or, at least, he thought he was.

Pretty soon the cook considered that she had been stared at long enough.

She could get no answer out of the dude, and as words failed, she concluded to try the force of deeds.

She was provided with a broom, and she at once proceeded to make a clean sweep with it.

It was a new broom, and consequently its effectiveness was much greater than if it had seen its best days.

So intent was Clarence upon ascertaining the power of the eye that he forgot all about the power of the arm.

He soon had an exemplification of it, however, and one that he would be likely to remember for some time to ensue.

With indignation in her optics and a broom in her fist, the cook proceeded to give Clarence his first lesson in light gymnastics.

Whack!

That broom took him across the quarter-deck, carried away his rigging, smashed the skylight, and swept forward.

Bang!

Broom was one lap ahead and on the inside track as it passed the judge's stand, and took Clarence across the corsets, half way between wind and water.

Thud!

The cook came up smiling for the third round, made a three-bagger hit on the dude's cocoanut, skipped over into the opposite court, scored fifteen to nix on Clarence's back, and went flying around the stake-boat with every rag of canvas set.

Biff!

Not to get things too much mixed up, the broom caromed on the dude's head, waltzed all over his back, banged against his legs, beat a tattoo on his wish-bone, glanced off and swept all the dishes from the dresser, upset a coal scuttle, and finally broke in two over Clarence's shoulders.

Down went Clarence on the floor, his coat split up the back, his whole wardrobe disarranged, and himself very much broken up, while the angry cook

stood over him, glaring defiantly at her fallen foe and clinging fiercely to the broken broom handle.

Matter had had a square and fair tussle with mind and had come out on top of the heap.

Poor Clarence could not have been more surprised if the prettiest girl in town had kissed him.

The matinee had been a short one, but the show was fully long enough to suit Clarence.

He sat on the hearth in front of the kitchen range looking up at the irate cook and wondering if there was enough left of him to pick up in a towel.

"Come into me own kitchen and insult me, will yez?" demanded the cook.

Poor Clarence did not know whether to get mad or to cry.

"Shtare at a leddy in that ill-mannhered shstyle, will yez?" continued the cook, twirling the broken broomstick about in her fingers.

Clarence was still too much astonished to answer, and did nothing but stare.

"Begob, I think yez'll kape yer place in the nursery afther this and not come prowling around thrying to mash respectable gurruls."

"Yaw a howid, wude cwechaw, and I'll wewawt you to the doctah," said Clarence, struggling to his feet.

"Ye will, key? Get out av me kitchen, ye second-hand dude!"

With that the cook began to beat a tattoo on Clarence's head with the abbreviated broomstick, playing a regular Irish jig with it.

"Oh, deah, I shall be beaten to a powdah," cried Clarence, making all haste to get out of that altogether too warm kitchen.

He stumbled over a coal-scuttle, he got caught in a clothes-horse, he barked his shins on a wood-box, and nearly fell into one of the stationary tubs, but he did at last succeed in getting out alive, and leaving his angry pursuer behind.

Then he returned to his room for repairs, considerably wiser than when he left it.

"That wot about the powah of the eye is all wubbish!" he declared, as he got out of his ruined clothes. "and I'll nevah believe anything moah I see in the papahs."

"I don't believe that howid cook could be chawmed with a glawnce of the eye any moah than you can make a wubbah overcoat out of a spidah-web, and it's all wot, that's what it is."

"My new walking jacket is wuined, my twousahs aw a weck, and I do believe my spinal column is bwoken in forty pieces."

That dude's investigations had proved too many for him, and he was not only hurt in body but in mind, for it hurt his pride to think that he had made a fool of himself without any assistance from Jack, Jim, or any of the boys.

He made up his mind to say nothing about the affair, but it got around for all that.

The cook told the up-stairs girl, she confided it to the butler, he whispered it to the housekeeper, and finally Smoke got hold of it, and then Jimmy and one or two others learned all about the racket.

"Trying to mash the cook yesterday, were you, Clarence?" asked Jimmy, when he met the dude the next day.

"No, sah, I have no desiah to flawt with the servants," replied Clarence, with great dignity.

"What was the trouble, then?"

"I was twying the powah of the eye, but it's all non sense."

"Trying to fascinate the cook by your gaze?"

"I was twying to mesmewize the cwechaw, but the powah of the eye is all wubbish, as I said befaw."

"How did you manage it?"

"I diwected a steady gaze on the cwechaw."

"Oh, you stared at her and looked stern. That'll never do. You should have looked your very sweetest."

"It's all bothewation and I don't take any stock in it any moah, me deah fellah."

"Not at all. There's lots in it; only everything depends on the expression."

"All humbug, old chappie."

"Not a bit of it," protested Jimmy, seeing a good chance to work up a snap. "There are plenty of incidents on record where one has controlled others by the eye alone."

"Pawhaps, me deah boy, but I haven't the powah."

"You don't know that. People often discover that they possess the most wonderful gifts by the merest accident. Try it, Clarence; you don't know what luck you may have."

"Then a fellah must look pleasant?"

"Yes, as sweet and winning as possible. Expression is everything, you know. I shouldn't be surprised if you could win over old Winder to treating us fellows better, if you really made an effort."

"Do you weally think so?"

"I do indeed."

"Aw, pawhaps I might."

And here the subject was dropped, for Jimmy did not want to dose that dude too heavily on the first round.

Clarence was thinking over the matter all the morning, however, and by afternoon had got it well fixed in his mind that perhaps after all he might turn Winder into the right path by the influence of a properly directed glance.

The dude was about to leave the house to go downtown when he heard a noise behind him, and, turning, beheld Winder approaching, ready to go out.

The professor looked particularly wrathful, and was muttering to himself in a way that indicated that his feelings were none of the most pleasant.

"Such a stupid lot of blockheads I never saw in the whole course of my experience," he was muttering.

"I'd like to hang the whole of 'em up and thrash 'em till they knew something."

Here was a good chance for Clarence to exert the magic power of a tender glance, and soften the hard heart of the irritable tutor.

As the latter approached, Clarence faced him and gave him one of his sweetest smiles, something between the expression of a man with the colic and that of a person eating honey.

Winder got the full force of the glance, and stopped short to gaze at the phenomenon before him.

Clarence turned on all steam, and beamed on the tutor like a lantern in a fog.

"Get out of the way," snapped Winder.

Clarence, however, threw all the tenderness of his soul into that melting glance, which would have broken up anybody but Winder.

But Jimmy had seen him go rolling down the steps, and knew what was the matter, and that Clarence had been trying to work the power of the eye racket again, and with the same success as before.

He concluded to let up on the dude for a time, though he told the boys of Clarence's adventure, and they all had a good laugh over it.

That night, after the boys had gone to their rooms, Tommy came into Jack's room with a broad grin on his face and a long string in his hand, and said:

"I say, boys, I've got a dandy job to put up on old Winder."

"Don't ask us in, Thomas," replied Jim. "We know how your snaps always come out."

"Have you half soled your breeches, Tommy?" asked Jack. "You're sure to get them warmed be-

"All right; you go ahead and do it."

"Won't you come along?"

"Not this evening, Thomas; the odds are against us."

"Won't you, Jimmy?"

Now, Jimmy needed no second invitation, and he not only went along, but coaxed Jack to accompany them.

Arrived at the window Tommy had selected, Jimmy carefully raised the sash, and the fat boy lowered his infernal machine and put it into working order.

After one or two trials the hook was fixed into the woodwork of the window below, and then the mysterious knocking began.

Tommy was so full of the fun of the thing, imagining Winder's fright and all that, that he quite forgot about the other boys.



"Shtare at a leddy in that ill-mannhered shtyle, will yez?" continued the cook, twirling the broken broomstick about in her fingers. Clarence was still too much astonished to answer, and did nothing but stare.

"What are you smirking at me like that for, you idiot?" growled Winder. "Do you think I'm your sweetheart?"

Clarence put more sweetness than ever in his glance, until it was sickish enough to turn the stomach of a cat.

Winder thought the dude was making fun of him, and that was something he would not stand from any one, much less from a stupid dude, whom he considered to possess insufficient brains to last him over night.

When he got his mad away up he was likely to make things fly, and that's what he did on the present occasion.

"I'll teach you to laugh at me!" he snorted, and, raising his walking-stick, he gave Clarence a poke in the stomach which caused him to collapse like a house built on a swamp.

"Ow!" yelled Clarence, as he doubled up, and then Winder pushed by and landed the dude all in a heap on the top of the stoop, from which it was an easy matter to roll down like a ball into the snow at the bottom.

Winder never stopped to see if Clarence was hurt, but went right on down the walk, and for several moments that dude did not know which end of him was uppermost.

"Owushed again!" he remarked, as he finally found his feet. "The powah of the eye is all moonshine, me deah boy, and Jimmy has made a fool of you once moah. It's weally too bad what stowies that boy does tell."

Then he brushed himself off and went sorrowfully on his way, resolving never more to trust to anything that Jimmy might tell him.

hind, and you ought to be prepared for an emergency."

"There ain't no danger of getting found out at all I tell you," protested Tommy. "You duffers are getting so scary that there ain't no more fun to be had nohow."

"What is your little game, anyhow, Thomas?" asked Jimmy, who wanted to know what was going on, even if he did not take a part in it.

Tommy then unwound his string and showed on one end a stout fish hook, while from the main string, a foot or so above, depended a shorter line, to the end of which was attached a heavy lead sinker.

"Going fishing, eh?" laughed Jack.

"Yes; you see I know where Winder's window is, and I'm going out in the hall, just over it, and let this thing down."

"Well?"

"Then I catch the hook below; and when it is fast, haul on the line and then slacken on it and so tap on his window with the sinker. That'll frighten him out of his wits."

"Quite an invention," laughed Jimmy, "but do you think it will work? Can you be sure of making the hook fast?"

"Certainly; all I have to do is to let it down and then haul up on it, and it will catch on the sash."

"Perhaps it won't."

"You might go down on your rope ladder," suggested Jack, "make it fast and then come up again."

"Oh, go take a bath," said Tommy, greatly disgusted.

"Or you might slide down the lightning-rod, fix your hammer and then climb up again."

"Ah, you're too funny."

Giving Jack a punch, Jimmy presently attracted his attention and beckoned to him to come away.

The boys stole off noiselessly, and, when out of Tommy's hearing, Jimmy said:

"Do you know what window that donkey has fastened his tick-tack upon?"

"Winder's, of course."

"Not a bit of it."

"What?"

"Cross my toes!"

"Whose is it, then?"

"The doc's."

"Honest?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well, that beats the Dutch."

Master Tommy has got things mixed up, as usual. Winder's room opens on the west corridor, on the floor below, and Tommy is on the wrong side of the house.

"Then he'll have a nice picnic if—"

"Cheese it! I hear a noise."

Somebody was coming up-stairs, and the boys laid low in the darkest corner they could find until the new-comer had passed.

It was the doctor in dressing-gown and slippers, carrying a tiny night lamp.

He did not see the boys, but passed right on and turned the corner, entering the corridor where Tommy was having his fun.

"Now, mosey!" whispered Jimmy, and the boys dusted.

"I'd like to see the fun," muttered Jack, "but it's a little dangerous."

"Come on," answered Jimmy. "We can take it in and get away in good time."

Then the two prowlers crept cautiously along, till they reached the corridor where they could listen, unseen, to all that went on.

Master Tommy was hauling and slackening on his line, keeping up a steady tick-tick-tick on the window below and having lots of fun.

"I'll bet he's scared to death," he remarked. "I say, give us a lift, will you? My arm is getting tired." There was no answer, and just then Tommy saw a gleam of light shoot past him.

"I say, I think you might—" and then Tommy turned around.

There stood the doctor himself!

Poor Tommy's hair stood on end, and he actually shivered.

"Are you amusing yourself, Master Wright?" asked the doctor, quietly.

"Yes, sir," gasped Tommy, scarcely knowing what he said.

"In that case, it would be cruel to interrupt your pleasure. Pray keep right on, and see that you continue the rapping as regularly as you began."

"Oh, no, it's no fun at all," stammered Tommy, who saw that he was caught.

"But you said that it was, and I know that you are not addicted to telling untruths."

That unfortunate youth saw that he was in for a night of the jolliest kind of fun—for any one but himself.

He thought it funny that the doctor would trouble himself about Winder's affairs, however, until he put on his discarded thinking cap.

Then he took a first-class drop and saw the mistake he had made.

"Pray keep right on with the rapping, since you enjoy it," said the doctor. "It does not disturb me a bit, I assure you."

Tommy knew that if he objected he would get a trouncing, and so he kept up his hauling and slackening with the regularity of clock-work.

"That's very good," said the doctor, dryly, "and I am glad you like it. Pray don't think of stopping. It will give you an appetite for breakfast. Good-night."

Then the doctor walked off as deliberately as a deacon or a man going to his own hanging, leaving Tommy keeping up that regular tick-tick-tick on the window below.

The doctor had said enough to let him know that any remissness in the work in hand would be promptly punished, and so he kept hauling away on that string with the regularity of a treadmill.

"H'm! I don't see how he can sleep through it," muttered poor Tommy. "He's just doing it to keep me up."

"Owl, how cold it's getting standing by this window," he presently growled. "I've a good mind to stop and take a licking, but then he may keep me doing this just the same, after I've had the whaling."

Pretty soon Jack and Jim came to pay him a visit, having eluded the doctor's vigilance.

"How do you like it, old man?"

"Ain't you losing your regular stroke, my boy? You go too fast and then too slow. That's not right."

"Daisy fun, ain't it, Tommy?"

"Don't you want to take a year's contract at that sort of business?"

"Oh, you get out!" snapped Tommy. "Why didn't you tell me the doc was coming up?"

"Wouldn't have interfered with your fun for a dollar, Thomas."

"You like it so much, you know."

"You're a couple of—ca-chew!" and Tommy let off a heavy old sneeze that scared the echoes.

"A couple of what, did you say?" asked Jack, politely.

"A couple of—psst, wow, ker chow!" and Tommy excelled his former effort.

"I beg pardon, please repeat," said Jimmy with all the grace of a Chesterfield.

"A couple of—whish, psst-tt-row-ker cherow!" answered Tommy, nearly lifting the roof with the volume of sound that he emitted.

"I don't believe it," laughed Jimmy. "Ta-ta, old fellow, pull up your socks."

"Over the reservoir, ducky," carolled Jack, and then he and Jimmy lit out, leaving Tommy yanking away on that blessed line and sneezing like a dozen cats in a fit.

Tommy did not lack for company in this amusement, however, for Jimmy had given the other boys the straight tip and they all came to pay him a visit.

First came Gilbert, Davenport and Sinclair, and after they had buzzed him for a time they gave place to Ralph, Phil and Joe, who had lots of fun chaffing that poor innocent.

Dick Williamson, Ned Crandall and Charlie Edwards then paid their regards to Tommy, and after them nearly every boy in the school, till the poor fellow got his head away up.

Lastly came Smoke, to chaff and jeer him and suggest various things, and then Tommy was mad.

"Yo' don' pull de 'tring reg'lar 'buff, Marse Tommy," said Smoke, with never a grin, though Tommy knew he was laughing inside for all that. "De doctah don' like de way youse a doin' it, I tol' yer."

"It's nothin' to you if he don't," sputtered Tommy, and then he made a dash at his sable tormentor and grabbed him by the collar.

Then that long suffering fat boy proceeded to get square on Smoke for all he had had to endure that evening at the hands of his various friends and admirers.

The way that young coon was hauled and yanked and booted and shaken up was a caution to evil doers.

At last he made a bolt, leaving his shirt in Tommy's hands, scampering down-stairs a vision in black and white.

"I ain't going to pull on the old thing any more, if do get licked for it," said Tommy.

Then he fired Smoke's shirt down-stairs, went off to his own room and barricaded himself within, resolved to defy the doctor and the whole force, sooner than keep up that monotonous yanking on a string all night.

The best of it was, however, that the doctor never came near him all night, and had not returned to the room where he had first heard the rapping, which was his study and not his bedroom at all.

Poor Tommy didn't sleep for some hours, and then he dropped off with his clothes on, being afraid to take them off.

He finally awoke, just in time to go down to breakfast, but it was with fear and trembling that he did so, as he felt sure he was going to get a thrashing.

Instead of that, the doctor took him into his study, and said:

"Master Wright, you may remove your little invention from my window. I trust you enjoyed your night's sport."

Then Tommy saw how he had been sold, and he felt flat enough to lie between two shingles.

He took down his little arrangement and stowed it away in his pocket, making up his mind to be more sure of his game the next time he went to play off a joke.

Much as he liked Jack and Jim, however, he was not inclined to forgive them for having gone back on him and determined to get square.

"I never would treat them like that," he remarked, "and it would only be serving them right to play some trick on them."

Having decided upon this, however, the next thing to do was to get up some good trick.

Tommy's ideas were never very original, so he presently thought of the old, moss-grown gag of putting a basin of water over a door left ajar, and giving the victim a ducking when he went to go into the room.

He rigged this sort of business up on the door of the room where Jack and Jim slept, by the aid of a chair, for he wasn't tall enough to reach to the top, and then awaited developments.

He hung around the hallways for some time that afternoon, and at last, as neither Jack nor Jim appeared, went down-stairs and out on the playground where some of the boys were having lots of fun at a sham battle.

He saw Jack, but Jimmy was not around, and so he thought of a snap by which to get Jack up-stairs.

"Hallo, Dodson," he said to Jack; "your cousin is waiting for you up-stairs."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, he's sick and can't come out."

"That's funny," mused Jack. "I saw Jim only ten minutes ago, and he was all right."

However, he said nothing, but followed Tommy up-stairs, the fat boy allowing him to go ahead when they reached the upper floor.

Suddenly Jimmy appeared and made a dash at Tommy, saying angrily:

"I've got it in for you, my boy, and I'm going to give you a dandy licking."

Tommy was certain then that Jimmy had been caught in the trap he had set for him.

Jimmy did not seem to relish the joke, however, and Tommy saw that he was in for a licking if he did not look out.

"Bahl you couldn't catch a mouse," cried Tommy, hoofing it in lively style toward his own room.

Jimmy gave chase, pressing Tommy hard, but somehow not catching him.

Tommy, however, was scared, and reaching his door, dashed it open and bounced in, thinking that then he was safe.

There's where he made his little error.

PART XVII.

TOMMY WRIGHT thought that if he got inside his room he would be safe from Jimmy Grimes.

He had played a joke upon Jimmy, or thought he had, and was now escaping from the wrathful James.

He ran into his room, banging the door after him, thinking that Jimmy could not catch him here.

In his hurry, however, he had neglected to notice what lay before him.

The result was that as he banged the door behind him he stumbled over a portable bath-tub and went sousing into it in a jiffy.

In he went, head and hands, spluttering the water all around and spluttering like a drowning pup.

"Who in thunder left that tub in the way?" he muttered, as he got on his feet all wet and flustered.

At that moment the door flew open, and Jack and Jim came in.

Of course they caught Tommy at his prettiest.

"Ah, there, young Neptune, how's the water?"

"Got your face washed for once, have you, Tommy?"

"Bully good snap on me, wasn't it, eh, old man?"

"Didn't get up quite early enough, though, did you, Thomas?"

"Sort of back-action snap, wasn't it, fatty?"

Thus did Jack and Jim console Tommy for the backward action his snap had taken.

"Funny, isn't it, 'cause I forgot and left this tub of water in the middle of the floor?" said Tommy.

But Jimmy was not being humbugged in such a way as that.

"It won't do, Thomas, old boy," he remarked, with a placid smile. "I put that tub of water there myself."

"Oh, well, then we're only quits after all, for you got a ducking, too," chirruped Tommy, as he swabbed himself off with a coarse towel.

"But I didn't get it, my boy," remarked James, with a chuckle. "I tumbled to your little game and came out as dry as a bone."

"That's too thin," snorted Tommy. "You got soaked and you don't like to tell about it."

"Oh, I'd confess the provender if I got stuck, Tommy, every time, and you can sew that in your socks, but this wasn't one of the times."

"You can't fool me, I know you got a shower," protested Tommy, who hated to admit that he had been caught in his own snare.

He was pretty dead sure that he had been, but for all that he didn't want to say so right out in meeting.

"If you don't believe me, come and see," said Jimmy, and he and Jack waltzed Tommy off to their room between them.

Jimmy had taken the basin down, and it now rested on the wash-stand full as ever, while not a drop could be seen on the floor or elsewhere.

"Fact is, Tommy, I caught on to your little game from seeing the door open," said Jimmy, "and I got in through Harry's, which connects, and then rigged up the racket on you, so you might as well confess that we licked you at your own game."

"I would like to carry something out and not make a mess of it," muttered Tommy, sadly, "but somehow or another I always slip up."

"Then you and Clarence must be twins," laughed Jack.

"Two blockheads ought to be better than one," added Jimmy. "Why don't you get the dude to help you, Tommy? You and Clarence would make a dandy team."

"Give us a rest," growled Tommy. "Do you think I am an idiot?"

"You can guess some things pretty well, anyhow," returned Jimmy, and that got Tommy wilder than before, and he flounced out of the room as mad as a cat with wet feet.

Tommy was thirsting for revenge, though, and would not be satisfied till he had it, for although he liked Jimmy he wanted the satisfaction of being able to say that he had played a joke off on him.

He lay awake that night a long time thinking of what he would do, and at last he hit upon a plan that he thought would work first-rate.

Early the next morning he stole down into the large school-room before any of the boys had arisen, and went to Jimmy's desk.

Taking that joker's book of exercises, Master Tommy drew on one of the blank pages, in red chalk, a burlesque representation of Professor Winder, being quite a hand with his pencil.

Then he replaced the book in Jimmy's desk, first pasting down the written pages, so that the one with the caricature on it would be the first to appear when the book was open.

All went along smoothly that morning until Jimmy, Jack and a lot others went into Winder's room to recite.

As they passed in they put their exercise books on Winder's desk and took their seats.

As luck would have it, Jimmy never opened his book, having written his exercises the night before, but laid it with the others on Winder's desk.

As it happened, that individual was as cross as a bear with a sore head that morning, having suffered all the night before with a terrible toothache.

His face was all swelled on one side, and he had the temper of an angel—a bad one, however—and looked cross enough to eat the whole class.

He glanced over the exercises and struck Jimmy's book, with its illustration, at the first shot.

"Is this your work, Grimes?" he said, in menacing tones.

"Yes, sir," answered Jimmy.

"Entirely original, is it?"

"Certainly, sir; I never copied from any one in my life."

"Well, the work may do you credit as an artist, but not as a gentleman," and the angry professor shied the book at Jimmy and took him alongside the head with it.

Tommy giggled, and Winder jumped out of his seat, grabbed a rattan and knocked more dust out of that boy's jacket than would get into it for another month.

Jimmy picked up his book from the floor, where it had fallen, and opened it.

The cause of Winder's wrath was at once revealed.

Two or three of the boys saw the cartoon with the professor's name under it, and of course they laughed.

Then they wished from the bottom of their boots that they hadn't.

Winder had just finished with Tommy, and had his hand in.

The way he sailed into those boys was thrilling to see.

The poetry of motion was nothing to the lyric splendor of his gyrations.

He cut and slashed and belted till nobody knew where he was going to strike next, and anybody had as good a chance as another at receiving one of his favors.

Finally he went back to his desk and sat down, remarking, amiably:

"I never saw a worse lot of young brutes in all my life. Grimes, if you repeat this offense I'll have you expelled."

Jimmy did not say anything, for he knew somebody had been playing roots on him, by the appearance of his book, and did not care to give any one away.

Tommy, however, was generous enough not to wish that any one should suffer on his account.

He forgot all about his grudge against Jimmy, though it had never been very deep, and blurted out: "It wasn't Jimmy that did it at all. It was me!"

Jimmy at once saw the meaning of Tommy's giggle at the time Winder had thrown the book across the room.

"Silence!" thundered the professor, in a first-class rage.

"I won't!" yelled Tommy, not a bit scared. "I say it was me, and Jimmy didn't know nothing—"

Winder cut short his explanation by seizing him by the collar, throwing him across a bench and hammering away at his back door till the rattan broke.

"Don't you tell me you won't be quiet when I command you to," snapped Winder, as he desisted.

"Well, it ain't fair to lick another feller for what I did," yelled Tommy.

"You needn't complain," grunted Winder. "You won't get any less than you deserve on that account."

Then he walked back to his seat, giving a sly cut here and there to the boys that he fancied needed stirring up.

"and so he showed up as usual. I suppose we'll get it worse to-morrow."

"Not if I know it," said Jimmy, with a sly wink.

"What are you going to do?" asked Harry, knowing well enough that Jimmy had some good snap on the hooks.

"Wait and see, my boy," was all that the little joker would answer.

Winder did not put in an appearance at the supper table or afterward when the boys met in the study-room, which was quite a relief.

Jimmy collared Smoke just before bed-time and interviewed him respecting the sick tutor.

"How is he getting on, Smokey?"

"Bery bad, sah; he hab a head on him bigger'n a bar'l, an' he'm snortin' roun' like a bull in a fit."

"Who sleeps over Winder's room?" asked Jim.

"We do," answered Will. "Harry and I, and just now, as we came away, we could hear that old duffer below tearing around and making no end of noise."

"Well, we must wait till he gets to sleep before we can—"

Just then there came a knock at the door.

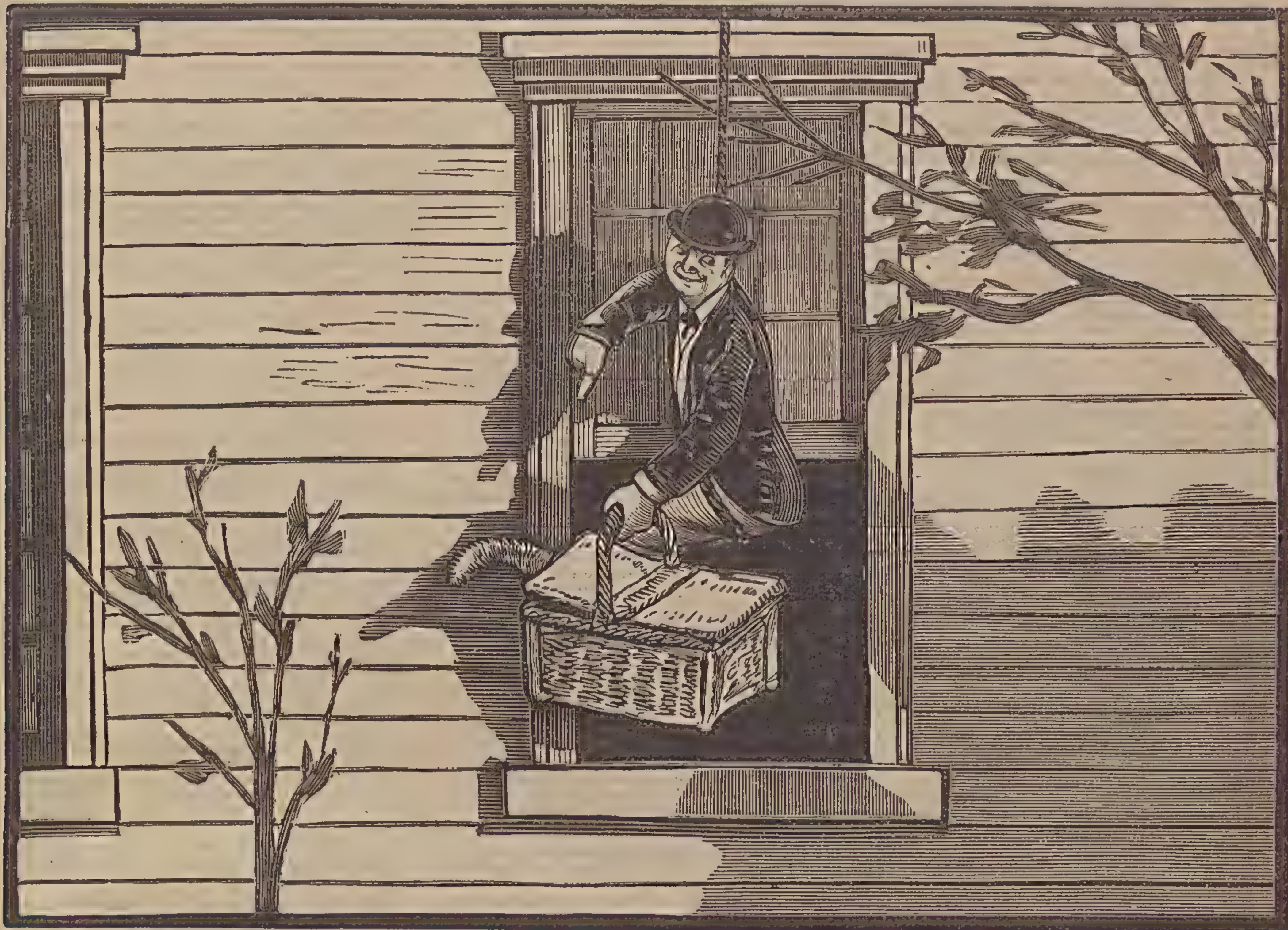
"Get under the beds, boys," whispered Jack. "In with you, Jimmy, and I'll put out the light."

The boys stowed themselves away, and Jack put his night-shirt on over his clothes and doused the glim.

Then the knock was repeated and Jack said sleepily:

"Yes, sir, I'll be up in a minute."

"Let me in, boys," said a voice, and the knock was repeated.



Mrs. Puss was prancing around inside the basket and her tail stuck out under one of the lids at least a foot. "Keep quiet, you brute," hissed Jack as he shoved the basket inside.

"Somebody ought to step on his neck," whispered Jack to Jim.

"I wouldn't mind making a parade-ground of his spinal column myself," returned Jimmy, who, it must be confessed, did not entertain an all consuming admiration for Winder at that moment.

"So Tommy has been up to his tricks again, has he?" laughed he to himself. "That youth is a genius, only nobody will ever find it out."

The more Winder slammed around the worse he seemed to get, so that between his temper and his toothache the boys had as jolly a time of it as if they had been having a slugging match with the champion.

The more the professor excited himself the worse his pain got, and the more his teeth jumped and made it lively for him, the more he did the same for his beloved pupils.

He had a face on him like a peck measure that afternoon, and one might as well have started a private little inferno of their own as to try and live with him while he was in that state.

"I'd like to blow his old tooth out and his head with it," growled Tommy, who was saddest when he sat down, having had more than one seance with Winder that day.

"They say gunpowder is good for the toothache," said Jack. "How would it do to fill him up and touch him off?"

School was out, and Winder had retired to his room to doctor his dancing teeth, the boys being now free to discuss the situation.

"If he was sick why didn't he knock off for a day and let some one else take his classes?" asked Gilbert. "I'm sure we wouldn't have kicked."

"Oh, he wanted to wallop somebody," said Walter,

"Have you been to his room?"

"Yas'r, to took him some gruel an' some hot stuff fo' his jaw, but he don' see nobody now."

"You couldn't go in later on, could you?"

"Wouldn' darse to do it, sah, an' 'sides dat de do' am locked an' bolted."

"So Winder has a big head, has he?"

"Yas'r, he hab it all wrapped up in red flannel wif mustard an' pep'mint an' gin an' lots oder hot stuff. Gorry, de place smell like a stillery."

"I'm sorry for him," mused Jimmy, "but if he had not excited himself to-day he would have been all right."

When the boys started to go up-stairs to bed Gilbert came to Jimmy and asked:

"I say, Jim, what's the little racket?"

"Come up-stairs and I'll tell you all about it."

When the bell was rung for all lights to be put out, a quiet little company assembled in the room occupied by Jack and Jim.

Besides those two there were Harry, Walter, Will and George, that being considered quite enough by the two chief conspirators.

"What are you going to do?" asked Harry, by way of opening the meeting.

"I'd like to get into Winder's room, but it's locked," said Jim.

"Well, there's more than one way to get in, isn't there?"

"Go down the chimney," suggested Jack.

"Get in at the window," said George.

"Who's got a rope and a basket?" asked Jim.

"What do you want of one?"

"To go down on, if anybody will do it?"

"I'll go down," spoke up Jack, "if you fellows on't drop me."

Jack jumped up and turned on the light.

"Well, I'll be blowed!" he remarked, "if we haven't been frightened by that donkey, Tommy Wright."

Instantly all the others came out of their hiding-places and began holding an indignation meeting.

"Won't you let me in, boys?" asked Tommy in a hoarse whisper from the other side of the door, trying to turn the knob.

"What'll we do with that idiot?" asked Jack.

"Duck him!"

"Smother him!"

"Tie him to the bed-post."

"Let him in."

The last suggestion came from Jimmy, and Jack opened the door and let in their fat young friend.

Tommy seemed delighted to be with them all, and his cheeks shone like a well-polished door-plate.

"Hallo, fellers, what's up?"

"You are, and you ought to be in bed," said Jack, who liked Tommy well enough, but did not fancy the fatality which always went with him, like the thorn to the rose, or the muscular breath of the onion.

"Have you got a rope?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes."

"A strong one?"

"Strong enough to hold three or four of us boys."

"Produce it."

Tommy went off to get the rope, and Jimmy said to Jack:

"Come with me, old fellow, but first take off your shoes."

Then Jack and Jim, taking a candle with them to use in case of an emergency, removed their shoes and stole quietly down-stairs.

Reaching the lower regions, they made their way

to the kitchen, the scene of Clarence's adventure with the cook.

Jimmy lighted the candle and began nosing around in search of something.

"Here it is," he presently cried, as he yanked out a big market-basket from a closet.

It was a stunning, square affair with lids which opened on either side of the handle, and would hold a whole family's provisions for a week.

"There's the basket; now for something to put in it."

"What do you want?"

"Here, puss, puss," called Jimmy.

A big black and white cat, as large as a dog, came nosing along from a warm corner of the hearth and rubbed her head against Jimmy's leg.

"Nice puss," said Jim, stroking the moll bruiser and getting her on the most excellent terms with herself.

"Purr—rr, ain't I a boss mouse catcher?" that cat seemed to say.

The only thing that has more self-esteem than a cat is a dude, and they both think that they are some pumpkins, with the accent on the pump.

"What are you going to do with that big brute?" whispered Jack.

"Raise the lid of the infant moving van, my boy, and you shall see."

"Bully pussy, dandy old cat," continued the young scamp, stroking puss under the neck while Jack raised the basket lid.

Puss thought that she was just some, and that Jimmy was dead mashed on her, and she purred like a steam engine.

"Now you see it and now you don't," remarked James, as he suddenly lifted Grimalkin off her feet and poked her into the basket.

Slam went the lids down, and then Jimmy caught up the basket while Jack took the light.

Puss stirred around a bit inside the basket, and made several remarks of an uncomplimentary nature to Jim, but after that, seeing that she could not get out, she settled down for a nap.

"What are you going to do with her?" asked Jack, in a slow-music-and-lights-down voice.

"Put her in Winder's room and see the fun," answered the first heavy villain.

"Good enough."

Then Jack led the way with the light while Jimmy followed with his cargo of cat, puss having concluded to keep quiet for the present.

On the way up Jack made a slight detour and paused in front of Winder's door to see what was going on.

The beloved teacher was snoring away at a four hundred bull frog power rate, and was making night melodious with his horn solo.

That nose had not been greased, evidently, and so it occasionally struck a false note which interfered somewhat with the full Wagnerian harmony of the concert.

As a snorer Winder was a brilliant success, and the range of his instrument, from deep bass to high treble, was something bewildering in its compass.

Now it would sound like the rumble of an earthquake, the rush of an express train through a tunnel or an orchestra of mules playing on bass drums.

Then it would take a skip up the scale, resembling forty engines blowing off steam, or a whole army of sopranos gone mad and trying to outscreech each other.

Jack listened to the music for a few moments, and then returned to Jimmy.

"All serene; he's snoring like a whole chorus of jackasses."

"That's good; so much the better."

Then those two bandits sloped up-stairs to Jimmy's room, where the others were anxiously awaiting their coming.

Tommy had brought the rope, about twenty feet of it, and strong enough to hang an ox.

"Now we're all ready," whispered Jimmy, "let's go to Gilbert's room."

The little band of plotters made their way noiselessly to the sumptuous apartment occupied by Gilbert and Sinclair, and then Jimmy proceeded to unfold the programme for the evening's entertainment.

"First: Perilous slide for life by Mr. Jack Dodson," he remarked.

"Good enough."

"This artist, suspended only by a single cord, will descend from this window to the one below and back again."

"How is he going to descend up?" laughed Will.

"That's one on you."

"Second: The fierce jungle demon, the untamed wild cat, Methusaleh, will be let loose and indulge in single combat with the great Winder."

"Who will do his best to wind her up," added Jack.

"Then you'd better put the winder up," remarked Tommy, who was fond of ringing the changes on the professor's name.

Jimmy opened the window, and now the sound of the tutor's tootings was heard more plainly.

"Guess he's got his own window up," said Jimmy. "That'll make it easier to get to work. Will you go down, Jack, or shall I?"

"Let me go," answered Jack, putting on his shoes, "only be careful that you don't let the rope slip."

Tommy's rope was then made fast about Jack's body, and he himself was lifted out of the window.

"Give me the basket," he muttered, and when it was passed out he grabbed it securely by the handle.

As the boys began lowering him the cold air struck upon the cat inside, and she had something to say about it.

"Meow!" she remarked.

"Shut up!" hissed Jack.

Down he went, the rope about his body slowly

lengthening out, till he reached Winder's window.

"Sst! that's enough!" he hissed.

By this time the cat had begun to get uneasy.

That feline creature's tail got as big as six, and thrashed around inside the basket at a great rate.

Jack now rested his foot on the sill and proceeded to run the window up very cautiously.

It had been open at the bottom a few inches, and all he had to do was to put his hand under and run it up.

Mrs. Puss was prancing around inside the basket, and her tail stuck out under one of the lids at least a foot.

"Keep quiet, you brute," hissed Jack as he shoved the basket inside.

Then he opened it, turned it upside down and dumped puss out on the floor.

"There you go. Now amuse yourself."

Then he slammed down the window without any particular regard to caution and gave a yank on the rope.

"Haul away, boys," he whispered. "The show is about to begin."

The boys grabbed hold of the rope tighter than ever and pulled Jack up just as strange sounds began to be heard below.

"It's all right," chuckled Jack as the boys helped him in, Tommy having taken the basket.

"Did you get her in?"

"Yes."

"And shut the window?"

"Cert."

"You didn't wake up his nibbs?"

"Nary."

"How did the bruiser like it?"

"First class. She's beginning to sing."

The boys listened, though there was not much need of keeping dead still.

First there was a yell and a shriek and a splutter and then a thump on the floor, followed by a crash.

"The concert has commenced," laughed Jimmy.

"This snap will just put rollers on anything that's gone before," remarked Jack.

"And set the ball a-buzzing."

PART XVIII.

PROFESSOR WINDER, if he was not sleeping the sleep of the just and innocent, was at least indulging in a first-class snooze.

He had tied his head and face up in flannel soaked in all sorts of hot things, and had managed to deaden the pain of his aching jaws long enough to get a sleep.

Suddenly, however, he became dimly aware of a cold draught blowing upon him, and then of a heavy fall.

He could not tell where it was exactly, but presently he heard an awful shriek right in his room.

O-row-meow?

There is no describing the effect that the wail of a well cultivated feline voice has upon one's nerves when heard suddenly in the dead of night, or when one has just awakened from sleep.

One must have been there to know just how it feels.

"Great snakes, where is that cat?" asked Winder, looking all around.

There was just light enough in the room for him to see objects indistinctly, and he could make out something prowling about the middle of the room.

"Shoo, scat, get out!" he ejaculated.

"Psst-psst, meow-skerow-eow!" remarked puss.

"For Heaven's sake! it's in the room!" gasped the astonished professor. "How in thunder did it get in?"

Get out of here, you nasty brute!

But puss kept nosing around and yowling, and at last Winder jumped out of bed and turned up the light.

He was a sight to behold, with his big night-shirt and that collection of rags tied about his head, and it was no wonder the cat spat at him.

She arched her back, swelled her tail till it was as big as a club, and expressed her disapproval of his interference in the choicest terms known to the cat language.

"Get out!" cried Winder, throwing one of his boots at the intruder.

The latter got her back up at this treatment, and backed out of the way.

"Scat!" and another boot went flying toward that feline brute.

She jumped on a chair and glanced defiance out of her beautiful green eyes.

"Shoo!" and a pillow went whizzing through the air.

Over went cat and chair and all of Winder's clothes with a bang.

Then puss took up a position on the washstand and set up a howl.

"Whist!" and a hair-brush waltzed across at Tabby.

It broke the nose off the water-pitcher and ousted pussy from her place of vantage.

In her flight Winder sent a shoe-brush flying after her, but it did no other damage than smashing the mirror.

"Dunce take you!" and a soap-dish carromed on her spine, glanced off and shattered the glass in one of Winder's pictures.

A big cake of soap followed, went wide of its mark and knocked a vase off the shelf.

A shaving mug then went to its relief, and struck up such a close acquaintance with the clock that the latter abolished the tick system and tumbled off on the floor.

A whisk broom then went whisking on its way, and swept off a whole line of glassware on the washstand, disposing of the whole at a great sacrifice.

By this time Winder's temper was away up in the nineties, and still rising.

"Plague on you, get out!" roared Winder, grabbing

up a boot-jack as the cat made a dash for the bureau.

Things were pretty well disordered in that room by this time, as might be supposed.

Regardless of consequences, however, Winder let go of that boot-jack as though it had been red-hot.

It finished the demolition of the looking-glass, and puss jumped upon the mantel.

The bolster, hurled with deadly effect dislodged her from that place.

It also took everything else off, and there was a first-class crash.

"Meow-ow, psst-sst!" said puss.

"Thunder and guns!" added Winder.

Then followed a fusillade with boots, socks, towels, hat-brush, blacking-box, glove-lifter, toilet-glass and cuspidor, in rapid succession.

Some of them struck the cat, but more did not.

Some went through the window, some knocked the picture-frames silly, one went through the fan-light and some split the door panels.

Puss was in a frenzy by this time, and forgot her notes, getting all her fine arias and cadenzas into a frightful discord.

Winder's language, also, was hardly appropriate for the leader of a Sunday school.

"Get out, you dash! blasted imp!" he yelled, making a rush at the cat.

Then he tripped on the bed clothes and landed on the end of his spinal column with force enough to explode a thousand pounds of dynamite.

The rags fell off his face and hung about his neck like a garland, though scarcely as odoriferous.

It is needless to say that all this racket had aroused the attention of the whole household.

The shouts of the professor, the complaints of the cat, the crash of glass and the falling of the furniture would have awakened a whole cemetery of deaders.

Footsteps resounded in the hall, but Winder heard them not.

He was too busy in trying to get rid of that cat.

He had finally had the sense to think of opening the window, so as to afford an avenue of escape for the frightened feline.

At the same moment that he ran up the sash the door was burst open.

"What on earth does all this racket mean?"

It was Mr. Root who asked this all-important question.

Before he could get an answer, the cat made a dash at the door from her position on top of a wardrobe.

She landed on Root's head, on all feet, holding on for all she was worth.

"Ouch! Holy smoke, what's that?"

The astonished preceptor did not stop to find out but dusted.

Out of that door he went in a jiffy, carrying the cat with him.

Puss dug her claws into his head, got her toes tangled in his long hair and made things interesting for him.

"Ow, scat, take it off!" howled Root, not knowing what sort of wild beast he had struck.

As he danced down the corridor he came full tilt against Mrs. Guff who was flanked by Hodson, Smoke, the butler, and all the female servants.

Guff lost her grip in a moment and fell backward against the butler, who went down as easily as if he had been filling up on some of the doctor's choice wines.

"Fire!" yelled the housekeeper.

"Murder!" shrieked the up-stairs girl.

"Police!" roared the cook.

"Get out, you fat brute," cried the butler.

"Plague take the whole of you," sputtered Root, losing his balance.

"Scat!" ejaculated Smoke, as that big black and white cat, getting loose from Root's head, made a dash at him.

Then along came a lot of the boys in their night-shirts from up-stairs.

Puss had started for the stairs on the keen jump, but the boys intercepted her.

She was in too great a hurry to pick her steps, however, and so darted between the banister rails.

Down-stairs she went by a short cut, lighting on a hanging-lamp and making short work of it.

Over fell the chimney, smash went the frame and down came the whole business with a crash on the landing below.

Glass, oil, iron, brass, cat and all fell in a heap together on the floor below.

Laughing boys, howling cat, shrieking women, shouting men, crashing rubbish.

It seemed as though Pandemonium had the floor and was exercising its privileges to the utmost.

Puss sought safety in the kitchen, Guff hurried to the fire-escape, Smoke rushed off to the pantry to help himself to sweetmeats in the confusion, the boys took occasion to have a grand pillow fight in the upper halls, and the butler kissed the cook, thinking no one was looking.

Clarence had heard the racket, and thinking there was a fire, had put on all the good clothes he could get on him, throwing the rest over his arm, and now appearing with his best silk dicer on his head, his nobbiest canes under one arm and his best silk umbrellas under the other.

"Is the fish vewy neah?" he asked. "I've fawgot my glasses, bless me if I haven't."

Then Winder came out of his room as the doctor appeared from below, and wanted to know what all the row was about.

"The cat got into my room," explained the professor, "and I had to drive it out."

"Was it necessary to raise the roof off the house to do it?"

"Well, she wouldn't go out!"

"Where is she now?"

"Gone down-stairs," muttered Root. "I broke open the door to see if Winder had a fit."

"If you had opened the door in the first place she would have gone out, I think, professor," said the doctor to Winder.

The latter thought so too, and felt mad enough to thrash every boy in the school.

The boys were having a high old time up-stairs when Jimmy twigged the doctor, and cried in a hoarse whisper:

"Cheese it, boys, the doc is about!"

They all scampered except Tommy, who had just sent a pillow flying at Jack, and had thrown it down stairs in his eagerness and bad marksmanship combined.

He hurried after the pillow, without hearing Jim

as he did not go directly to bed, he caught more cold in his jaws, and had a regular night of it.

He groaned and tossed about, and said naughty things, and finally got up in the morning with a head as big as a bushel basket, and with the fiend's own temper.

He stayed in his room all day and took care of himself, much to the delight of the boys, who wished that he might remain there a week.

His absence lasted three or four days only, however, and in the meantime there was lots of fun going on.

The day after the catastrophe in Winder's room, a lot of the boys were out on the river having a fine time skating.

"The ice was soft or 'ticklish,' and would bend

"There! I told you I could," he cried, gleefully, as he picked himself up.

"Better go around coming back," continued Walter.

But Tommy was going to show those boys that he wasn't frightened at anything, and so he started to return by the same route.

If he had not been Tommy he might have got through all right.

But he was, and that is where the trouble came.

Not content with simply skating across rapidly, he must needs put on frills.

He started off on one foot, and began cutting all sorts of fancy figures just as he reached the worst place of all.

The ice sank away down and suddenly collapsed.



Some of them struck the cat, but more did not. Some went through the window, some knocked the picture-frames silly, one went through the fan-light and some split the door panels.

my's warning, and ran almost into the doctor's arms. "Master Wright, what are you doing out of bed at this time of night?"

Tommy was caught but not convicted.

Opening his eyes wide open, and staring all around in the greatest surprise, he picked up his pillow, and said innocently:

"Well, I declare, if I haven't been walking in my sleep again! It's a mercy I did not go out doors."

Then sticking his pillow under his arm, Tommy walked off up-stairs as solemnly as a judge, leaving the doctor looking after him with surprise depicted in every feature.

Then he caught on to the spirit of the thing, and laughed quietly, Tommy making good his escape.

Winder went back to his room, straightened things out as well as he could, and tumbled into bed, vowing vengeance on the one who had let that cat in his room, provided he found out who it was.

Quiet was gradually restored, and the various members of the household went off to bed, some wondering whether Winder were crazy or drunk, and others dimly conscious that a job had been put up by some one upon that long-suffering instructor.

Jack, Jim, and the rest of the boys in the secret had lots of fun laughing over the racker, voting it the very best yet.

The basket was smuggled back to the kitchen without the knowledge of either Mrs. Guff or the cook, and the poor cat got the blame of the whole business.

She looked, the next morning, as if she had been making a night of it with the other felines of the vicinity, but as she couldn't tell how the fuss began and the boys would not, nobody was any the wiser.

Winder's exciting chase of that poor cat threw him into a profuse perspiration, in consequence of which,

under the boys' weight as they passed over it, to a considerable extent.

Jack, Jim, Will, Walter and Harry would start from one bank, skate rapidly over the undulating surface and reach the further bank in safety, the sport being considered first-class.

"It's getting a little too ticklish for fun," remarked Jimmy, the last time he went over.

"She's going to crack before long," said Jack, as he came over just after Jim.

"Keep her a-bolling, boys," said Walter, as he glided up from the billowy surface and struck the firmer ice.

All the boys had passed over, being on the side of the stream nearest the school, when along came Tommy down the river, wearing a brand new pair of skates.

"Hello, boys! having a tickly bender?" he said, by way of greeting.

"Yes, but it's getting too shaky."

"Hol' you fellows are ascares at nothing," laughed Tommy, scornfully.

"Try it yourself, then," said Jimmy, winking at Jack.

"Maybe you think I daren't," and Tommy tightened one of his skate-straps.

"You'll be a fool if you do," muttered Will.

"H'm! I guess I can do what you fellows can," snorted Tommy, pulling his big cap over his ears.

"Better not, Tommy," said Harry.

"That's as good as daring me to do it," cried Tommy, wishing to show off.

Then he started off with a rush, swept across the bending ice at full speed, and went plump into a big snow-drift on the other side.

Tommy went out of sight in a jiffy, and for a few seconds nothing was seen of him.

Then he came up, sputtering and blowing and grabbed hold of the rotten ice.

It cracked like glass thrown on a hot fire, and down went Tommy again.

"Is it deep there?" asked Jimmy.

"No, not over three feet," answered Walter.

"Hey! hallo, help me out!" yelled Tommy.

"Swim out!" laughed Jimmy. "You're such a dandy skater."

However, they got a couple of rails off a fence and helped Tommy out, though they all wanted to laugh at him.

"Same old luck, eh, Tommy?" said Jack, as he took Tommy's skates off.

"I don't see why I can't do the same things that other fellows do," said the fat boy.

"It isn't in you, Tom," laughed Jimmy. "But, I say, you mustn't stay here with your things all wet. You'll catch your death and go gliding around on golden skates by to-morrow, if you do."

Then they all took Tommy and trotted him off as fast as he could run toward the school.

"Hold on, don't run so fast!" he yelled. "You're getting me all out of breath."

"Stir your pegs livelier. That isn't half fast enough," laughed Jimmy.

With that those boys made Tommy just scamper, though he tried to hold back and go slow.

"You'll catch cold, if you don't run," snickered Jack, and poor Tommy nearly ran his short legs before he got to the school.

"Now, I suppose I'll have to go to bed and soak my feet, and take hot gruel and all that," muttered Tom-

my, as he went in, "and I wanted to go coasting to-night."

"Oh, we'll send Clarence up to amuse you," said Jimmy. "You and he are just a team."

But Tommy scouted the idea, and said he'd rather talk to a jackass than Clarence.

"Then talk to yourself," said Jack, "and you will have your way."

However, the boys had another way of spending the evening besides going coasting, and Jack now disclosed a plan he had formed.

It happened to be Clarence's birthday, and they proposed to celebrate it in fine style.

"You ought to give the boys a good lay out, Clarence," Jack had said, "because they are so fond of you."

"Yas, deah boy, I think it would be weal splendid," returned Clarence, "but wheah can I get the spwead now? It is too late, don't ye know?"

"Oh, you can get Smoke to smuggle you up some grub from the kitchen and we'll have a dandy cold lunch."

"To be suah. I will intawview the little niggah on the subject."

"You'd better invite all the nice fellows of our set, I suppose?"

"Of cawse, deah boy, and I'll leave that to you."

"Oh, I'll see that it's very select and elegant."

"Of cawse."

When Tommy had been taken care of, therefore, Jack invited all hands to supper in Clarence's room that night, Tommy included.

"You'll be all right by that time, my boy," said Jack, "and we'll all have a bully time."

Clarence, in the meantime, had seen Smoke and given him his ideas concerning the intended feast, having first bribed him to silence by the gift of half a dollar.

"We want to have a little cold lunch, me deah boy," he said; "some cold chicken and wine jelly, and sandwiches, don't ye know?"

"Yas'r, dat am all berry nice," said Smoke, with his usual solemn expression.

"I suppose you could appwopwiate the necessawwy pwovendah fwom the pantwy if you twied weal hawd?"

"Yas'r, I knows jes' whar de tings am kep', an' I know dere'll be lots ob good wittles dere dis ebenin'. I gits yo' some punn cake an' mince pies an' doughnuts ef yo' want 'em."

"The moah the bettah, Smoke, deah boy. Baw Jove, yaw a weguh colawed angel, don't ye know?"

"What time yo' want 'em, Marse Cla'nce?"

"Hawf aftah ten, deah boy. It'll be vewy quiet at that time, don't ye know?"

"All right, sah, I brung de tings up to yo' room at dat time."

Clarence having arranged for the spread, and Jack sending out the invitations, the affair promised to be quite a success, and those interested were anticipating having a jolly time.

After the boys were supposed to have gone to bed they stole cautiously down-stairs to Clarence's room, which was situated on the same floor with Winder's and the doctor's and instructor's apartments, the dude being considered somewhat more important than the regular students.

It was a jolly company that assembled in Clarence's "parlor," as he called it, and consisted of Jack, Jim, Harry, Walter, Will, Ralph, Phil, Tommy, George, Joe, Charlie, Dick and Ned, our young friend Jack having exercised his own judgment in giving out the invitations.

Tom and Dick Marble, Susie's brothers, would have been invited, but they did not live in the school building and were therefore left out.

"I hope the little niggah will bwing up gwub enough," mused Clarence, as he looked around and saw what a gang he was expected to feed.

The boys amused themselves in various ways until long past the hour appointed for the feast, and were beginning to grow impatient when there came a muffled knock at the door.

"There's the spread!" cried the boys. "Now we'll have a dandy lay out!"

Clarence opened the door, and in came Smoke with a big basket on his arm, the weight of which was considerable, apparently, from the way he grunted.

"I done hab lots ob trouble to get into de pantry, Marse Cla'nce, but I got de tings at las', an' heah dey is."

Then the table was cleared off, a clean sheet spread over it for a cloth, and the viands were laid out.

There was everything to eat that the boys liked, and from the quantity the supply for the next day would probably run short, the little smoke having made a big haul.

"I declaw, I forgot all about something to dwink!" cried Clarence.

"Yes, we ought to have a bottle of wine to drink your health," said Jimmy. "Hadn't I better go after it?"

"I'm afwaid it's too late, deah boy."

"Not at all. I can be back in twenty minutes."

"But the stoahs are all shut up at this hour, don't ye know?"

"Oh, no, they're not."

"Well, suppose we have the spwead fawst and the dwink aftah?"

"Then it'll be too late."

"Then nevah mind the wine, deah boy."

"But it'll be dreadful bad form, you know, not to have wine at a birthday feast. It won't be at all swell not to have it."

That settled it for Clarence, and he consented to have Jimmy go out after the wine, the supper to be postponed till after he returned.

There was no way of leaving the house at this time

of night, except by the windows, but the boys were used to that sort of business.

Tommy's rope was brought into play once more, and a big brass coal-scuttle was hung on the end to afford a rest for Jimmy's feet, that being better than having a noose put around under his arms.

The window was not as high as the one from which Jack had descended the previous night, and Jimmy soon reached the ground, the shaking of the rope indicating to those above that he was all right, and then the empty scuttle was drawn up.

Clarence and the boys waited patiently for his return, but in much less time than he had said it would take, a whistle was heard.

Clarence opened the window and asked, cautiously:

"That you, deah boy?"

"Yes."

"Got the stuff?"

"Yes."

"All wight," and Clarence let down the rope.

Presently it was agitated, and then Clarence and the boys laid hold of it and hauled with a will.

"Don't it seem heavy?" asked Clarence.

"That's the bottles," said Jack.

"Oh, yes, to be shaw it is."

The night was dark and stormy without and nothing could be seen below, not even the school buildings.

Suddenly a form appeared at the open window, and then it sprang inside, but instead of Jimmy Grimes, Jr., lo and behold! Dr. Bircham stood revealed!

PART XIX.

THE surprise of Clarence and the boys when they hauled the doctor up, instead of Jimmy, may be better imagined than described.

"Good-evening, young gentlemen," said the doctor, with a smile. "You were having a feast, I see. Pray don't let me interrupt you."

The boys could see that the doctor was making sport of them, and yet they did not dare laugh or even show surprise.

"Yas, it's my bawth-day feast, don't ye know?" spoke up Clarence. "Won't you join us, sah?"

"It is very strange I was not invited sooner," said the doctor, quizzingly. "for then I might have helped you furnish the feast."

This was very good, considering that the entire banquet had been prigged from the doctor's larder.

"I might also have given you the use of the dining-room, and let my servants attend, so as to make it more brilliant."

"Don't mention it, doctah, we shall do vewy well," answered Clarence, whom nothing seemed to abash.

The boys, however, knew that they were up after hours, that they were detected in a violation of the rules, and that the doctor was keeping them on pins and needles, and yet they had to keep up the farce.

"By the way, Master Grimes is below waiting to come up," said the doctor. "You had better send the carriage for him."

Of course they had to lower the rope again and carry the thing out, though they would all have liked to get away and leave Jimmy to take care of himself.

The doctor went so far as to haul on the rope with the rest of them, and in a few moments Jimmy was assisted in at the window.

"I am sorry I had to prohibit the use of wine at your feast," said the doctor, quietly, "but I don't approve of boys drinking it. Let us go on with the celebration, however, since you have done me the honor to extend me an invitation."

"Won't you take the place of honaw at the head of the table, doctah?" asked Clarence, who seemed to think that everything was all right, though the boys were trembling in their shoes and expecting a lecture at any minute.

"Thank you. I prefer to sit at your right and must ask you to preside, Mr. Jones, since the supper is in your honor."

Clarence sat down, the doctor next to him, and then the boys took their places much with the same feeling that a man about to be hanged sits down to his last breakfast.

The doctor acted as though the affair were perfectly regular, and soon put the boys at their ease, telling them amusing anecdotes and drawing them into conversation till they actually forgot the clandestine nature of the entertainment and acted as though everything were perfectly straight.

The doctor got in several sly hits from time to time, however, which brought it to mind, complimenting them on their caterer, on their servants and on the decorations of the dining-room.

The caterer was the doctor's own cook, the servant was Smoke and the decorations were pictures of race-horses, ballet-girls and sporting characters, for which Clarence had a fondness.

Finally, the feast having been disposed of, the doctor arose and said that he really must take his leave as he had so far to go, a quizzical smile playing about his lips as he said so.

Then he went out, making no allusion to the stolen supper, the clandestine expedition by the coal-scuttle and rope route, the being up after hours or anything which would indicate that the thing had been anything but in the common run of events and quite a matter of course.

When he had gone the boys looked at each other and exchanged glances of deep significance.

"We'll have to pay for our little feast to-morrow," said Jack.

"Let's all run away," cried Tommy, with his usual brilliancy.

"I don't see what theah is to be afwaid of," said Clarence. "It was vewy clevah of the doctah to come, and I ought weally to have ahsked him befoah."

"Oh, you blooming idiot," laughed Jimmy. "Can't you see that the doc was quizzing us, and made us carry the thing out so as to take the fun all out of it?"

"How did he twig you, Jim?" asked Harry.

"I don't know, but I think he must have been out somewhere and was returning, and saw me come down. I didn't know anything until after you had hauled the rope up and I had started toward the road. Then he suddenly appeared and asked me where I was going, and I had to give away the whole business."

"But why didn't he go in at the door, and not risk his neck on the rope?" asked Walter.

"He said that he thought it must be dangerous, and I said it wasn't, at which he said that he had never done anything like that when he was a boy, and that it really would not do for him to miss any experience, and so he would go up in the scuttle and I could follow him."

"Then he was with you when you signaled?"

"Yes—but what could I do?"

"Nothing," laughed the boys.

"He just thought it was fun to keep us in suspense all the evening, and we've paid pretty well for our fun."

"Guess we'd better adjourn," said Jack.

The assembly now broke up, Smoke skipping off with never a grin nor a wink, and the boys separating to their several rooms.

The next day the doctor called the party into his study in a body and said:

"Young gentlemen, I trust you enjoyed your feast last night, but in future let me have no more of these clandestine affairs. My house and my pantry are at your disposal if you wish to have any extra demonstration or celebration, so pray let there be no more of these secret meetings."

That was all he said, and there were no floggings, no detentions, no extra tasks, but it broke the boys all up just the same.

"The doc is a brick," said Jim, "and I for one won't take part in another such racket."

"Same here," said Jack. "We've been made to feel sheepish enough hto last the rest of the year, and I don't intend to make a fool of myself again."

That broke up the business of quiet little suppers in the rooms after hours, and there were no more heard of.

However, there were other means of having fun, and Jack and Jim collared right on to one just about this time and worked it for all that could be got out of it.

Of course that long-suffering dude, Clarence Fitz Roy Jones, was at the bottom of it, but then Jimmy had induced his father to send him to Dr. Bircham's for the fun that he and Jack could get out of him, and they were only fulfilling their part of the contract, implied if not expressed.

Winder had resumed his duties, having recovered from the evil effects of combined toothache, cat chasing and bad temper, and could once more be found at the old stand.

He was angelic as ever in his disposition, and did his best to harden the muscles and flesh of his pupils, if the frequent flagellations they received at his hands meant anything.

One day in a rage at his class, he said snappishly:

"I wish I could mesmerize all of you young imps! I'd keep you quiet for six months at a time."

The boys soon forgot the expression, but Jimmy remembered it and said to Jack that noon.

"I say, bub, I've got a good one."

"Who gets it?" asked Jack, smiling, for he knew that Jimmy had foreclosed a first mortgage upon some snap.

"The dude, provided he bites."

"Oh, he'll snap at it like a shark at a boy's leg."

"Yes, if we bait it with taffy enough."

"What is the nature of it?"

"You remember the mesmeric snap I played on a traveling showman once?"

"To be sure."

"Well, this is mesmerism."

"Are you going to put Clarence into a state of hypnotism?"

When this last soaker came out Jim looked grave and said:

"Look here, Jack Dodson, I don't know what injury I have done to you that you must fire such things at my head."

"I mean are you going to mesmerize the dude?" explained Jack, with a grin.

"Oh, that's it, is it? No, but I'm going to let Clarence do the mesmerizing."

"What!"

"And now it was Jack's turn to be surprised."

"Or make him think so."

"Oho, I see. More power of the eye business, eh?"

"That's it. I'll post the boys, and we'll have lots of fun."

"Make him try all the latest experiments in hypnotizing. Oh, I beg pardon. I gave you that once, I believe."

"Where did you find it, anyhow?"

"In the papers, and I guess that's where old Sourmug got his idea, too."

"Well, I'll read up and start the ball a-rolling this afternoon."

When school was over Jimmy strolled into Clarence's room, the dude getting ready to go out.

"Hallo, Clarence, old man! How do you feel?"

"Fawst wate, deah boy. How's yourself?"

"Miserable," said Jimmy, taking a seat. "I've got a roaring headache. I wish you could mesmerize it away."

"Pon my wawd, I wish I could, deah boy, but I cawn't, ye know."

"I don't know about that. I think you could put any one to sleep—by talking to them," he added, mentally.

"Oh, no, I guess not, deah boy."

"Try it once. Pass your hands in front of my face and look me in the eye."

"Oh, pshaw! I couldn't do it, ye know," protested Clarence, doubting his own ability.

"You might at least try," said Jimmy, in a hurt tone, "when I ask it as a favor."

That got the dude, and he went through the motions indulged in by mesmerists.

Much to his surprise, Jimmy sank back in his chair, let his head fall on his chest, and in a few moments was, to all appearances, fast asleep.

"Well, I neva!" observed Clarence, in the greatest astonishment. "I didn't know I had any mesmeric influence; it's weally quite surpising."

He stood there looking at Jimmy for a few minutes, and then suddenly recollected himself.

"Oh, baw Jove, I musn't leave him heah fahst asleep, ye know. He mightn't wake up for hours. Hallo, I say, Jimmy, wake up, it's all right, ye know."

Instantly Jimmy opened his eyes, sat up and looked around.

"Why, my headache has gone!" he exclaimed. "Have I been asleep?"

"Yas, deah boy."

"Very long?"

"Only a few minutes."

"And you mesmerized me after all. You possess a wonderful gift, Clarence, old fellow."

"Baw Jove, I'm as much astonished as yawself, don't ye know?" said that humbugged dude. "It's positively mawvelous, me deah boy."

"If you can put me to sleep you can manage anybody."

"Pon me wawd, it's weally sawpwising, quite miwaculous, I asshaw you."

"Tell you what, Clarence. Suppose you try it on some of the other boys, and when you have put them to sleep make them do all sorts of funny things."

"They'd neva dream that I was a mermewist, don't ye know."

"They've no idea of it, not the slightest."

"Do you weally think I can make 'em do what I choose?"

"Beyond a doubt, but you can try an easy subject first."

"Wheah aw the deah boys at pwesent?"

"Down in the study room, I suppose, enjoying themselves. Let's go down and have some fun!"

Then by a few doses of taffy, judiciously administered, that young falsifier made Clarence believe that he was no end of a mesmerist and could do anything in that line.

As they entered the main recreation room, used also for study at night, they saw a dozen or more of the boys engaged in different sports.

"Try Harry Gilbert," whispered Jimmy. "He's the nearest."

Clarence advanced, stood in front of Harry, made several mysterious passes with his hands before the boy's face, and said:

"Harwy Gilbert, go to sleep."

Harry, at once, stood as still as a stone, staring straight in front of him.

"Yaw asleep, aw you?" asked Clarence.

Harry nodded, and all the other boys gathered around to see what was going on.

"You didn't know Clarence was a mesmerist, did you, boys?" asked Jimmy.

Some of them were in the snap and some were not, but to Clarence the same look of surprise was on the faces of all.

"That's a vewy fine wose you have theah," said Clarence.

Harry immediately put his hand up to his nose and took a long snif.

"Take care, deah boy, you will pwick yaw nose. Why, it's bleeding already."

Harry jumped back, rubbed his nose, took out his handkerchief to stop the supposed flow of blood, and acted the thing to the life.

"It's all wight; wake up," said Clarence suddenly, and Harry resumed his natural look in an instant.

"What have you been doing to me?" he asked, rubbing his eyes.

"You can't mesmerize me, I'll bet," said Walter Davenport, in an incredulous tone.

"Try him," whispered Jimmy.

"I cawn't, eh?" said Clarence, making a few passes.

"Go to sleep, me deah boy."

Walter stood rigid in an instant and Clarence chuckled.

"Give him this," said Jimmy, handing the dude a ruler, "and make him think it's anything, a poker, a sword, or whatever you like."

"Take the pokah, me deah boy, and fix the flah," said Clarence.

Walter took the ruler, stooped down, and began poking at an imaginary fire.

"It's quite wahn, isn't it, old chappie?"

Walter rubbed his hands, and then shielded his face from the supposed fire in the most natural manner.

"Take care, there's a wed-hot coal on yaw clothes," cried Clarence. "It'll bawn you, if you don't look out."

Walter jumped up, shook himself and beat his clothes with his hands.

"No, it isn't a coal, it's a lump of ice. You must be awful cold, don't ye know?"

The supposed mesmeric subject began to shiver and shake, to thrash his breast with his arms and stamp his feet in an effort to keep warm.

"Why, I weally believe it's waining—wheah's yaw umbwella? Oh, heah it is," and Clarence held out a slate.

Walter took it, held it over his head and walked around, while all the boys laughed.

"Look out, the puddles aw vewy deep, you'll have to woll up yaw twousers."

Thereupon Walter pulled his trousers up to his knees almost, and stepped along very carefully, as though wading through deep water.

"Baw Jove, you'll have to swim, don't ye know," cried Clarence suddenly.

Immediately Walter flopped down on a long table and began to kick and strike out like a person swimming.

"All wight, all wight, wake up!" cried Clarence suddenly.

The look of assumed astonishment that Walter put on when he pretended to wake up and find himself sprawled out on a table, was too funny to see.

It hoodwinked poor Clarence completely, and he began to think that he was indeed a wonderful mesmerist.

Then Jimmy gave him some more suggestions as to what to do, and the boys appeared more interested than ever.

The next subject was Will Sinclair, and, to make more fun, another boy was mesmerized at the same time, George Power being the one selected.

"Give the young lady yaw awm, take the gentleman's awm, pwomenade," said Clarence.

Then Will and George marched around, arm in arm, as gentleman and lady, George putting on no end of airs and graces.

"Aren't you going to hug and kiss the lady?"

Will took his cue, gave George a terrible squeeze and a smack that resounded all over the room, whereat the boys all roared.

"Cahn't you waltz?" asked Clarence.

Both boys could dance and Jimmy whistled a waltz for them, and they went gliding about the room like a couple of giddy society whirlers.

"That's too slow, give us a jig," and, obedient to the word of command, the two boys thumped out the liveliest kind of a jig.

"Why, me deah feliab, yaw vewy dwunk, I do declare," cried Clarence to Will, "and so aw you," he added to George.

Then both boys began to stagger about, fall over one another, and act like a couple of very tipsy boys indeed.

"Faw shame! you mustn't lght, you know, it's vewy wong to fight."

Thereupon the boys began to engage in a mock slugging match, keeping it up until Clarence took the spell off them, as he fondly imagined, and awoke them.

That deluded dude now had a most exalted opinion of his powers as a mesmerist and thought himself very big pumpkins.

It was fun for the boys in the secret, for they vied with each other in doing the most ridiculous things in a serious manner, and to those who were not in the ring it was simply marvelous.

Then it was a regular pantomime to Jack and Jim, clown, pantaloons, transformation scene, red lights, gorgeous costumes, an augmented orchestra and the whole business besides.

"This is the best thing yet," whispered Jimmy to Jack. "It curls the feathers on a brass weather cock and makes a wooden Indian grin."

"It lays over othall their snaps we ever got upon him, for a fact."

"Take another subject, Clarence," said Jimmy, a number of boys having come in since the fun began.

"There's Charlie Edwards—take him."

Clarence went up to Charlie, waved his hands, looked him in the eye, and commanded him to sit down.

Charlie was up to snuff, being in the ring, and immediately did as Clarence told him.

"Won't you sing law the company?" asked Clarence. "Give us the latest opewatic gem."

Now Charlie's voice was changing just at that time, being a very good combination of a roar and a squeak common at a certain age.

He appreciated the fun, however, and tried to sing a ballad, the sudden and most alarming breaks from bass to treble and vice versa being very amusing.

"Yaw on flah—cawn't you see you are?" cried Clarence, as Charlie was floundering around on a high note.

The boy instantly stopped his singing, threw off his coat and vest, and began dancing about in the most frantic manner.

"Baw Jove! theah's a gweat, howid beah coming aftah you," said the dude. "You'll have to climb a twee, my deah fellah, ow he'll eat you up."

Charlie instantly assumed a look of the utmost terror, sprang toward a door, and began climbing up the side, getting his feet on the knob, when Clarence spoke the magic words that were supposed to bring him to his senses.

His sheepish look when he pretended to awake and find himself clinging to the door without coat or vest, was very cleverly put on, and took in Clarence and the uninitiated completely.

"Try somebody else," cried several of the boys eagerly.

"Oh, that's enough," said Jimmy. "You don't want to tire Clarence out, do you? Maybe you think it's an easy job to mesmerize folks, but I tell you it's a great strain on the nerves."

"You've no idea how it tires the brain," chimed in Jack. "It's really exhausting, isn't it, Clarence?"

"Vewy," replied the dude, who thought it best to say something, though he really couldn't see that the small amount of brain he had was especially overtaxed by his mesmeric exercises.

"We'll have another exhibition some day," said Jimmy, "and then Mr. Clarence will show you what wonderful things he can accomplish by mesmerism."

"You see, me deah boys, I have only wecently dis-

covawed that I possessed this powah," said Clarence, in perfect good faith, "and theahfaw I have not twied vewy many expewiments."

"He'll astonish you all the next time, though," said Jimmy, with an air of deep conviction.

"I'd like to see him mesmerize old Winder, and make him stand on his head," said Tommy, sotto voce.

Clarence did not hear the remark, but Jimmy did, and it gave him an idea.

"That will just take the teeth out of a buzz saw," he whispered to Jack.

"What will, my son?"

"A new rig that I've caught on to. Keep it keviet, my shild."

Clarence had now taken his departure filled with a sense of his increasing importance, and fancying that he was the latest wonder of the age.

Jimmy took Jack aside, and when they were alone, said:

"Master Tommy has given me an idea."

"That's very funny, for no one ever supposed he had any himself."

"Oh, well, they do say that we can sometimes learn from fools, and Tommy isn't quite that."

"Well, what's the idea?"

"To set Clarence to mesmerizing old Stick-in-the-mud."

"Professor Winder?" asked Jack.

"Ha-hum!" chuckled Jim.

It was a wonder Jack did not have a fit, the way he laughed at this latest proposition.

Jimmy did not say anything to Clarence till the next morning, when, as he was about to go into Winder's room to recite, he met the dude in the hall.

"Clarence," he said, suddenly, "I wish you would do me a great favor."

"Cawtainly, me deah boy, anything to oblige a fwient, you know."

"Come in and mesmerize Winder. He's as cranky as can be this morning. You can do it as well as not, and it will be doing the whole school a great favor. Think of the fame it will give you. Come along, that's a good fellow."

Jack happened along just at this moment and added his persuasions to those of his cousin.

"All wight," said Clarence, "I'll do it."

The two boys went in and took their seats, and then Clarence followed, walking slowly down the aisle.

"Grimes and Dodson you are late," snapped Winder. "I shall have to report you."

Then he suddenly caught sight of Clarence, who was coming down the aisle making mesmeric passes.

"What's the matter with you?" he snarled.

Clarence kept on down the aisle, still keeping up his mesmerizing business, while all the boys looked on in amazement.

"Has the fellow gone crazy?" gasped Winder, not knowing what to make of the dude's actions.

Clarence soon got beyond the rows of desks and neared the platform, getting wilder and wilder in his movements.

Winder stared at him as if doubtful of his sanity, and backed out of the way.

Clarence rolled up his sleeves, got more excited than ever, made more frantic passes with his hands, and began following Winder around the platform.

The professor was still gazing at him in blank astonishment. Keeping a good distance away, however, for fear of consequences.

"Is the fellow drunk or crazy?" he asked. "What is the idiot up to?"

"Go to sleep," cried Clarence, on the floor, Winder on the platform, "and he redoubled his exertions in the mesmeric line."

A light suddenly dawned upon the professor's mind, and he darted an angry glance at Clarence from out of his eyeglasses.

"The fun is beginning," whispered Jimmy to Jack.

"I wouldn't have missed this for a house and lot."

PART XX.

CLARENCE stood in front of Professor Winder doing his level best to mesmerize him.

That dude had been made to believe that he was just a dandy in that line.

He thought he could do anything he chose with the professor.

So he sawed away and made all sorts of passes with his hands, looking for all the world like a new sort of jumping-jack.

The professor suddenly realized what the dude was trying to do.

"Mesmerize me, will you?" he cried. "Well, I guess not."

Then he proceeded to get up a little show all on his own account.

He grabbed a long, lithe, tickle-'em-quick rattan from his desk with one hand and the collar of Clarence's coat with the other.

Then he held the dude out at arm's length, and proceeded to lay on the licks with that rattan in the most approved style.

The blows rained thick and fast on the seat of Clarence's trousers, and he jumped a foot from the floor at every lick.

"I'll mesmerize you and paralyze you, too!" cried the wrathful tutor.

Biff!

That rattan raised a welt four inches long down Clarence's right leg.

Whack!

It whisked obliquely down the other leg, split open the cloth, and raised another welt on Clarence's skin.

Swish!

Straight across the sit down portion of the dude's anatomy it struck, and poor Clarence thought he had sat on a stove running at its full capacity.

Then Winder thrashed away, still holding on to Clarence's collar, every blow telling.

That dude showed all the agility of a ballet dancer and high kicker combined, and the boys were amazed at the bewildering variety of his steps.

"Ow, ow! Faw goodness sake, stop!" yelled the dude.

"Mesmerize me, eh, you blasted idiot?" cried Winder, whacking Clarence across both legs.

Then the collar of that dude's tight-fitting Seymour gave way under the strain, and down he went all in a heap.

He sprawled out on the platform like a big frog, and Winder fetched him another across the rear as he got up.

"Don't try any more of your stupid jokes on me, you fool!"

Then when Clarence got up, smarting with pain, the professor seized him by his collar and the bosom of his demonstrative trousers.

First he proceeded to shake out what little sense there was left in him, and he was pretty good on the shake, too.

Then he ran that astonished dude down the aisle and toward the door, holding on by the nape of his neck and the seat of his breeches.

He just hustled that dude along at railroad speed, and Clarence had to go whether he would or not.

Out of the door he hustled him, the boys standing up in their seats, waving their handkerchiefs, cheering and otherwise showing their approbation.

"Hooray for Winder, the terror of the dudes!" yelled Tommy, regardless of the possible and very probable consequence of his rashness.

"Another black eye for Clarence and his scientific researches," laughed Jack, less boisterously.

"He'll neva addwess you aga'n, deah boy, nevah," said Jim, taking off Clarence's foppish manners.

"There, you fool, get out, and don't you dare to show your face in my room again."

Thus cried the wrathful Winder, as he slammed the door after having fired Clarence out.

"I'd like to take a wound out of the old duffaw," muttered Clarence to himself outside.

He was no slouch of a boxer, Clarence wasn't, but he hadn't had the ghost of a chance to display his science.

"If he'd only fight fajah," whimpered that smarting slim, "I could have knocked the nonsense out of the beggar in one round, baw Jove."

Poor Clarence; he could box like a professional pugilist, but his sporting blood was not nearly rich enough to enable him to stand a round with a rattan, and he had to back out.

"He's a wegulah duffaw and a cad, don't ye know, and I shahn't recognize him herea'faw when I meet him on the street. No, sir, nevah!"

By this time Winder had gone back to his desk, stopping on the way, however, to cuff Tommy, who was still indulging in the most exuberant mirth.

If the professor had not left his rattan behind him Tommy would have had a taste of its quality.

As it was he was let off with a box on the ear that made him think the side of the house had fallen on him.

Then Winder went on down the aisle, took his seat and darted thunder and lightning glances at the boys.

The latter had enjoyed the picnic first class, especially those who were in the secret, and it was no easy matter to keep from laughing outright.

The vulture eye of the angry instructor was upon them, however, and to even titter meant a daisy licking for him who should indulge in such unseemly levity just at that particular moment.

Just then, however, a derisive laugh floated in through the keyhole, and then a voice remarked:

"Yaw an old duffaw, and I'll punch yaw head when I catch yon alone, so theah, you old fwaud!"

It was Clarence who spoke, and this was the only way the poor fellow had of avenging his wrongs at the moment.

The boys laughed outright, as who could help doing, and that wound Winder up again.

He grabbed a rattan, danced down off the platform among those youthful jokers, and proceeded to make it hot for as many as he could reach.

"You've been putting that fool up to this nonsense some of you," he stormed, "and somebody has got to take it."

Then he banged away until, at last, that rash youth Tommy socked him in the eye with a wet sponge and brought about a cessation of hostilities.

One fool has more gail than a whole regiment of angels, it has been said, and Tommy proved the correctness of the assertion.

Squash!

That big sponge, hurled with unerring aim—for Tommy always was a good shot—spread all over Winder's face and sent a cold shiver down his back.

He ceased his labor of love very suddenly and looked around for the offender.

Every boy was bending over his desk, busy at his books.

"Who threw that sponge?" demanded that irate instructor, with wrath in his eye—likewise half a pint of dirty water.

Of course they were all ready to volunteer the required information—over the left.

"Te, he, sawved you wight," came a voice from the door.

Clarence had lingered a moment longer and had seen the sudden repulse of the enemy, through the keyhole.

He was glad that the boys had got a thrashing, for he now realized that he had been made a fool of once more.

He was also glad that Winder had got bit, and he expressed his delight audibly.

It was unlucky for him and lucky for Tommy that

he did so, however, as Winder instantly put him down as the one who had thrown the sponge.

"I'll teach that fool not to play any more tricks on me for one while," muttered Winder, as he went back to his desk and swabbed off his face, after which the recitation went on without further interruption.

Winder's first thought was to enter a complaint against the dude, but upon second consideration he saw that this would only make him appear more ridiculous and do him no good.

Clarence could bring a counter-complaint against him of assault, as he had no business to strike the dude, and so he at last concluded to let the matter stand as it was.

Jack and Jim and the rest in the snap enjoyed a good laugh over its latest development, and voted that there was more fun to be had out of Clarence than out of a trick male.

The dude was deeply offended at Jimmy, however, and would not speak to him or Jack for two whole days.

"That's all rubbish about mesmewism," he declared to himself, "and I don't believe I could mesmewize a broomstick. That was another of Jimmy's twicks and the boys waw all in the wing with him."

Poor Clarence! he always saw through the tricks that were played upon him when it was too late, and was just as ready to be bitten by the next new one as though he had never been made the victim of the practical jokes invented by Jack and Jim.

Our boys did not mind his not speaking to them for a day or so, however, for they knew that he would come around in the end and that then they would have as much fun as ever.

Meantime things were going on about as usual, it being an even race between Winder and the boys to see which would make it liveliest for the other.

"I've got a good snap for Winder," said Jack to Jim one morning.

"Name it, my son."

"You know how he hates flies?"

"There are plenty on him, if he does."

"Yes, they've got onto him, as the saying is."

"Well, what's the snap?"

"Oh, it's a fly one."

"Then let her fly, John Henry, and elucidate."

Jack took a pair of eye-glasses from his pocket and held them up so that Jimmy could see them.

"Do you make connection with my idea, James?"

"I don't know as I do."

"Well, get possession of our beloved tutor's glasses so that I can put these in their place, and then you will see some fun."

"Let me gaze once more on the optical substitutes which you hold."

"Optical delusions, you'd better say. Are you on board?"

"You can wager your moccasins that I am," laughed Jim, completing his investigation.

"Then you are fly, I see?"

"As well as other things. You want the prof's glasses abstracted?"

"Yes."

"Trust tome."

This was before breakfast, and afterward, as the boys were leaving the main school room to indulge in their usual seance with Winder, Jim seized the opportunity and whispered to Jack:

"It's all right, I have fixed it."

"Good enough."

After the boys had seated themselves and the recitation had begun, one of the blinds in the room began to slam.

"What is the cause of the sun's—"

Bang!

The slamming shutter cut off the rest of the question.

"What is the cause of—"

Slam!

Once more that refractory shutter slammed open and shut, drowning every other sound.

"I say, what is the—"

Whang, bang, slam!

That blind was evidently trying to do a big day's work, for it pounded away at the window as though the worst kind of a gale were blowing.

Winder stood it for a minute or two, and then jumped up in a rage, dropping his eye-glasses on the floor.

As he bounced toward the window Jim whispered hoarsely to Jack:

"Now's your time, old man."

Jack jumped up, picked up Winder's glasses, stuck them in his pocket and put another pair on the desk.

"Let me fix the blind, sir," he said very politely, as he went forward.

Winder was nearly knocked off his feet by Jack's courtesy, but as he could not see very well without his glasses he missed the quizzical look on the boy's face.

"I wish you would," he said, as he returned to his desk.

Jack opened the window, looked out and saw Smoke just scurrying around the corner of the house.

"So, so, he is the wind that kept slamming the blind, is he?" he laughed, as he fastened the shutter back. "That's what you might call a black squall. Jim put him up to it, I suppose."

As Jack took his seat, Winder put on his glasses and began to ask questions.

"What is the cause of the sun's—"

He had gone as far as that, when he stopped and passed one hand in front of his face.

"Get out!" he ejaculated.

The boys looked puzzled, as well they might, at this strange conduct.

"What is the cause— Shool hang that fly."

Then Winder whisked a big handkerchief across his nose and nearly knocked his glasses off.

"What is the cause of— Confound the beast!" and there was more handkerchief business. "Dodson, what did you let that fly—get out you pest!"

Then Winder let fly with his wipe once more, and this time his glasses fell off.

"If there's anything I hate it's flies."

Then he set the extra pair of eyes astride his nose.

"Now, then, what is the cause—"

Here he stopped and looked mad enough to shake his mother-in-law, if he ever had one.

There sat an audacious fly, and a big fellow at that, right on the left lens of his glasses.

That the creature should have the impudence to return, after being brushed away but a moment previous, was too much for good nature by a big majority.

"Blast you, get out!"

The professor made a dash at that fly with his big fist.

His nose got the crack, his glasses fell off and for a moment he saw stars, comets and all sorts of things, heavenly and otherwise.

It was fun for the boys to see the dearly beloved Winder in a tantrum, but it was just a regular moon-light hop, band, flirtations, ice cream and strawberries and all, to the two who were in the secret.

"Cuss that fly!" growled Winder. "The place is kept so hot that they breed right here in the house. By summer time we'll have a million."

Then he wiped his damaged nose and put on his glasses.

"What is the cause— Great Scott! there he is again!"

This time he grabbed his glasses in his fist and yanked them off in a hurry.

The boys laughed, but Winder paid no attention to them, being engaged in investigating his glasses.

Even without them on his nose he could not help seeing the big fly painted on one of the lenses, right in the middle.

"H'm! No wonder I could not brush off a painted fly!" he growled, "but I'd like to know how the mischief he got there?"

The secret was out at last, and the boys all howled.

Jack had got a transfer picture of a gigantic blue bottle and had stuck it on a pair of eye glasses, being the ones he had shown to Jim.

Jim knew if he could get Winder to jump up suddenly the man would be sure to drop his glasses, when the substitution could easily be made, and he had, therefore, hired Smoke to set that shutter to banging.

"Who painted that fly on my glasses?" demanded the irate tutor.

"How could anybody do it when you always have 'em on or with you?" asked Tommy.

The question was natural enough.

It settled Tommy's bash, however, as might have been supposed.

He was looked upon as the offender forthwith.

"Come right out here, Wright, and confess outright that you perpetrated this downright outrage," said Winder, who was mean enough to make puns in addition to his other offenses.

"What for?" blubbered Tommy.

"Because," and then, when Tommy did not seem inclined to come, Winder went for him, yanked him out of his chair, tumbled him across a bench and half-soled his breeches with the biggest rattan he could find.

Then another pair of glasses was procured, and business went on as before, the flies no longer troubling the worthy Winder, though as Jim had declared one could not truthfully say that there were no flies on him.

After that, if any of the boys desired to send Winder away up into the seventh heaven of delight, they had only to mention flies in his hearing to accomplish their object.

A day or so after this little episode the boys were having fine sport one afternoon on a hill not far from the school.

Coasting had gone out of fashion and toboggans had taken the place of bob sleds, several of the boys possessing the Indian article which they now used instead of the Yankee invention.

Jimmy had a regular daisy, long enough to take on half a dozen boys, and finished off with red cushions, bells, fancy ribbons, and all sorts of fallals.

He and Jack, Walter and Harry had been down on it several times, and were having lots of fun, the slide being quite steep and as smooth as glass.

It was beginning to get just a little tiresome, however, when along came Clarence, rigged up regardless, to look at the fun.

Somehow or other the presence of that dude always revived Jimmy's drooping spirits.

"Catch on to the slimmy," he whispered to Jack.

"Here's a chance for some amusement."

"Hello, Clarence," said Jack, as they reached the top of the hill.

"Aw, how de do, deah boy?"

"Come out to see the fellows enjoying themselves?" asked Jimmy.

"Yas, deah boy. Is tobogganning as fine spawt as sledding?"

"Knocks the wind out of it."

"Beats it one mile in two."

"Won't you go down with us?"

"Aw, isn't it wathaw dangerous?"

"Not a bit."

"Theah's no dangaw of upsetting?"

"Can't upset; we're right on the ground."

"But you have to steal?"

"Anybody can do that."

"Well, I don't mind if I sit in fwont."

"That's the best place."

Then Clarence sat down on the cushions, cuddled

his feet up under the hood of the toboggan, wrapped his fur ulster about him and grabbed hold of the rail.

He was all right, except that he had been donkey enough to wear a high silk hat, which is as out of place in tobogganning as seal skin gloves on the Fourth of July.

Jack, Harry, Walter and Will took seats next, Jimmy hanging on behind to steer.

"Let her go!" said Jack.

Away she went, rushing down that slide at the apparent rate of a mile in a second.

"Ugh!" muttered Clarence.

He felt as if he had been fired out of a cannon or dropped from the roof of a fourteen-story flat.

He hadn't recovered his breath when they struck the first bump, or "thank-ye-ma'm," as they call them in rural districts.

Then he thought that his heart and all his other internal organs had jumped up into his mouth.

"Oh, Lawd!"

Over the bump they went with a jump and a thump and shot straight down the icy slope.

Away went Clarence's high dicer the first thing, and never stopped till it landed in a tree forty yards away.

Then they struck another knoll, and Clarence thought that his back bone was coming out at the top of his head.

"Aw, baw Jove!"

Down they went with a rush that would have knocked telegraph time clean off its supports.

The hill seemed to fall away in front of them, and Clarence tried to shut his eyes but could not, the wind blew so hard.

Then he held on as tight as he could grip, feeling every moment as though he should land in the next county all broken up.

They reached the level at last and shot ahead a hundred feet, when Jimmy sheered off with a quick movement of his foot and brought them to a standstill by the side of a big snowdrift.

Clarence tried to get up, but for a moment he felt as if he was frozen stiff and could not move.

"You ought not to have opened your mouth, Mr. Clarence," laughed Harry. "It's a wonder the wind did not turn you inside out."

"Baw Jove, it's weal exhilarating, don't ye know," gasped Clarence, getting up and shaking himself, "but wheah is my tile, me deah boy."

"Gone to roost on yonder tree," laughed Jimmy, "but as the poet sings:

"It's as well to say a word or two in favor of the hatter,

And as you've plenty more at home it really doesn't matter,

So please patronize the hatter,
For it really doesn't matter,

It really doesn't matter, matter, matter, matter, matter."

"Look out," laughed Jack, "or your ruddy gore will stain the snow. You didn't know Mr. Gilbert was present," pointing to Harry. "He objects to his thunder being stolen by Americans, and you might get into a mill."

"I thought Sullivan was the 'boss miller and not Gilbert," said Jimmy.

"Well, it isn't our Gilbert, and the othaw is English, you know, so it weally doesn't mattah," responded Jack.

Some of the boys had recovered the dude's hat, however, and he now plodded up the hill with the rest, watching the other toboggan loads as they went whizzing by.

"Want to go down again?" asked Jimmy, as they reached the top.

"Weally, it's quite fascinating, don't ye know, and I think I will twy anothaw slide. It's quite the thing now in New Yawk, deah boy, I heah."

Clarence made one or two trips after that, and was getting quite used to it and really enjoyed the sensation, when Jimmy determined to put up a job on the unsuspecting dude.

He would have done so before, but he had not had time to think of it.

Clarence sat in front, as before, but instead of the other boys getting on, Jimmy gave the thing a shove and away went the dude all alone.

"Good-bye, Clarence," cried the boys, as the spruce young dandy started off on his solitary trip.

Then Clarence looked hastily around and saw that he was the only occupant of the vehicle.

"Gweat heavens!"

Then his heart jumped clean up into his mouth, and he took all the shine out of the snow for whiteness.

PART XXI.

ALONE on a toboggan shooting down half a mile in, half a minute.

That was Clarence.

This time his hat stayed on his head, although the loss of his hat was not the worse thing to be feared.

"Gweat Jewusalem! how shall I evah stop the thing?" murmured Clarence to himself.

It was all right going down, but when he came to stop it might not be so funny, as Clarence well knew.

Away and away, rushing down the hill like a streak of lubricated lightning went Clarence, the breath being nearly blown out of him.

He hung on to those ropes with the tenacity usually ascribed to the angel of mortality when clinging to the heel of a deceased colored gentleman.

So long as he stuck to the toboggan he fancied he was safe, and if he had been glued there he could not have maintained a closer hold.

As he went spinning down the hill like a lost comet or a runaway railroad train, the boys caught on to the fun of the thing and had lots to say about it.

"Signor Jonesio in his celebrated slide for life."

"Only twig the way he clutches the lines."

"Get on to the line of beauty when he curves his back."

"Look at the flying fairy on his very much untamed steed."

"Wait till the sled goes by, Jimmy,

Wait till the sled goes by,

Then you will see some fun, Jimmy,

Clarence, dear, don't you cry."

So sang Jack, as he stood watching the dude in his mad night down the hill.

Clarence was bound to stick on, for he knew that if he once fell off he would break his eye-glass for sure, and perhaps ruin those darling trousers.

Consequently he stuck to that toboggan like a leech to your foot when you're swimming in a fresh water pond.

When he struck the jumps he thought the top of his head was coming out through his hair.

He passed them in safety, however, and presently struck the level, and went scooting away for dear life.

"Baw Jove, it'll soon be ovah, don't ye know," he muttered.

It is always unsafe to shout too prematurely as the prophet remarketh.

Clarence lifted up his voice anterior to his emerging from the forest.

The speed of the Canadian cutter was greatly abated and it promised to stop in time, but then, Clarence knew no more about guiding it than a katydid knows of the multiplication table.

Suddenly, in fact, with most deplorable suddenness, the bow of the toboggan came in contact with a tree.

It was not a big tree, in fact it was little more than a sapling, but if it had been a veritable giant of the forest, it could not have done any more damage.

What it did do was quite sufficient for all practical purposes.

It split that toboggan from stem to stern with all the ease and grace of a practiced woodchopper.

Likewise reduced it to match wood in less time than it takes to collect a dollar in a darky church.

Furthermore it spilled that dude out upon the snow so quick that he got there before he knew he had started.

He went into a snowdrift up to his ankles, but, as he went in head first, it was not so funny as it would at first appear.

All that could be seen of that dude was a pair of gaiters and just a glimpse of dizzy hosiery.

The rest had gone to meet the pretty violets under the drifting snow.

Some of the boys, coming down the hill on their flying steeds, saw the accident to poor Clarence.

They went to his assistance and dug him out, nearly floundering themselves in consequence.

"I don't think I fancy this sawt of spowt as well as some othaws," remarked Clarence, when asked how he enjoyed his slide.

"Oh, you will get used to it in time," observed Jack.

"Yes, if he doesn't break his neck first," added Jim, in a don't-mention-it whisper.

"It was weal mean of you to send me down alone, don't ye know," said Clarence.

"Why, didn't you know that the thing got away from us before we could get aboard?" asked Jack, with a wink at Jim.

"Bettah tell that to the mawines, me deah boy," answered Clarence, pulling down one eye-lid. "Old sawlaws won't believe you, don't ye know."

Then Clarence left the hill, resolved never more to indulge in the pastimes of those frivolous boys.

"Well, my toboggan is busted into everlasting smash," laughed Jack, as the dude walked off, "but I've had more than enough fun to pay for it."

"Never mind, Jacky, my son, I'll let you go whacks with mine," said Jim. "It's worth smashing things up every day to get up a good guy on Clarence."

"He'll steer clear of us now, though, for some time."

"Yes, just long enough to give us time to think up another rig on him."

After Clarence had taken his departure the boys continued their sport till tea-time, and had lots of fun.

Winder came loafing around soon after Clarence had gone away, and stood for a few minutes watching the boys enjoying themselves.

"If some of the young imps would only break their necks, there would be less of them to thrash," he affably ejaculated.

"There's old Whalem," remarked Jim, catching sight of the dearly beloved. "I'd take two good lickings to send him spinning down the hill the way that dude went."

"Oh, he'd be safe enough," remarked Jack, "if he only struck on his gall. That's tough enough to stand a blow from a sledge-hammer."

"If a tree collided with his cheek the tree wouldn't get the best of it, by any means," observed Walter.

"Wonder if he's thinking of something nice to say to us at dinner," said Harry.

No, it was not particularly nice, and this is what it was:

"Those young idiots will waste more surplus vitality over this sort of business than they would ever think of expending upon their studies. I'd like to see them crack their skulls against some of the trees, but their heads are so thick there is no danger of it."

Having delivered himself of this most amiable and delicately expressed sentiment, the rattan-wielder wended his way homeward, leaving those jolly boys to their fun and frolic.

The next day was a stormy one for the boys in more ways than one, the professor having one of his tantrums, and making things as lively as he knew how.

The oil of birch flowed freely, and the extract of

rattan was applied without stint by that disciple of King Solomon, who did anything but spare the rod.

When the boys first greeted Winder that morning he proceeded to do the agreeable in his own peculiar style.

"What is the meaning of convex?" he asked of Tommy Wright.

"Hollowed out."

"H'm! then what is concave?"

"Hollowed in."

"Please explain," and Winder looked dangerous.

"Well, a cup is hollowed out on the outside and hollowed in on the inside."

"Then a telephone must be concave, for that's hollowed in," whispered Jack.

"And a shout must be convex, because that is hollowed out," returned Jim.

"How can a thing be hollow on the outside, you ninny?" cried Winder, in disgust. "What is a vacuum?"

"A piece of nothing with nowhere to put it," returned Tommy, who wasn't so far wrong after all.

"H'm! your mind is the biggest vacuum I ever saw. What is space?"

"Plenty of room."

"H'm! then there is space for improvement in your case. How large is the sun?"

"Never measured it," replied Tommy, up a stump at last.

"I'll measure you, you young ignoramus," and Winder whacked Tommy over the back with his own particular tickler of a rattan.

Tommy jumped back and did the measuring act himself, for he measured his length on the floor, having fallen over Jack's extended foot.

Then he was told to meet the professor in his bedroom after school hours, an appointment which Tommy would have liked to miss.

After that Jim and Jack were detected in a surreptitious communication and they too were requested to be in Winder's room after hours that afternoon.

Then Harry Gilbert was caught laughing at something Walter Davenport had shown him, and they too were invited to attend the matinee in Winder's room.

This rather quieted the rest for they suspected that there would be more fun for Winder than for themselves at the performance to be given in the professor's room that afternoon.

There was very little more trouble that morning, consequently, and only one boy was added to the list, Will Sinclair being the lucky one.

Things went serenely that afternoon, and Winder was as calm as a duck pond, the boys fondly imagining that he had forgotten all about his little invitation.

It was simply the calm that precedes the blizzard, however, for Winder was not the sort of fellow to forget a thing like that.

When school was about to be dismissed, he said in his suavest manner:

"I will meet certain young gentlemen in my room in about ten minutes. I trust that they will not keep me waiting."

Forget all about it!

Hardly.

This the invited guests thought, as they went sorrowfully to the rendezvous.

Preparations had evidently been made for their coming, for when they entered the room they found six chairs placed in a row in front of a table on which lay a pleasing assortment of rattans of every variety.

There were little wiry ones, not thicker than a slate pencil, but with lots of snap in them, and there were fat, well developed fellows as thick as your thumb, big, and possessing remarkable staying powers.

They ranged from a foot long, for use at short range, to six feet, used for sharpshooting practice, with every grade of length and thickness between.

There must have been a dozen of 'em, and Winder had evidently prepared for all emergencies.

"Somebody's going to have some fun," remarked Tommy, lugubriously, as he took his seat at the end of the line and then they all laughed.

"Winder isn't going to have it all, though," remarked Jimmy, as he abstracted the key from the door and dropped it in his pocket.

"What are you going to do with that?" asked Jack, slyly.

"Tell you later, my boy," replied Jim, taking the other end of the line.

"You'll get the first licking," laughed Tommy, "cause you're at the head of the line."

"Yes, unless he begins at your end, Thomas."

"H'm! then I won't take any chances," and Tommy took one of the middle seats.

Presently the sound of Winder's number tens was heard coming along the hall, and the boys all took seats.

"Good-afternoon," said Winder, as he came in and shut the door. "You are punctual, I see."

"That's no fault of ours," thought Jack. "If we hadn't been we'd have got it all the worse."

"Ha, I suppose you know what you are here for?" and the genial fellow took up his biggest rattan.

"Wright, step out here."

"I ain't first," blubbered Tommy.

"No, you're generally last, in your class, but in this case the last shall be first. Step out, if you please."

Then Tommy stepped out, with all the alacrity of a man going to his own funeral, and got his dose.

He howled and he kicked and he yelled, all for effect, however, for he was tough, and it took a pretty good licking to reach him.

He got all he cared for, however, and then Winder told him he might go.

"H'm! Those fellows saw me licked and I won't see any of the fun at all," growled Tommy, in great disappointment, as he left the room.

Then Winder experimented on Will Sinclair, and started up the circulation in first-class style, sending him to join Tommy, after he had finished with him.

Walter and Harry got their doses next, but as Winder was looking around for an extra sized persuader to use on Jack, in came the doctor.

"Young gentlemen, you are dismissed," he said. "Remain within the school grounds for the rest of the week. Professor, this sort of thing must stop. I am only sorry that I did not know of this before."

Winder looked terribly disappointed; and, as Jack and Jim left his presence, he muttered:

"Something has got to be done to instill respect into those young scoundrels' minds."

"They are not young scoundrels, though I believe you would make them so, if you had your way."

"Well, how am I going to teach them to behave themselves?"

"Try doing so yourself a few times. I never have any trouble with them worth mentioning."

"H'm! you don't flog them as much as they deserve."

"And you much more than they deserve. I think my course is the better one."

With that the doctor left the room, while Winder arranged his toilet and went out for a walk, though the weather was very inclement.

"Bully for the doc!" chirped Jimmy, when he had reached his own room. "He's an angel, minus the pin feathers."

"Old Hunks got left that time, didn't he?" laughed Jack. "Tell you what, the weather moderated all of a sudden, didn't it?"

Just then Walter and Harry came in, and Will presently joined them.

"You fellows got off, didn't you?"

"But I say we've got to get square."

"How are you going to fix his nibbs?"

"There will be no postponement on account of the weather," returned Jimmy. "I've arranged for another little show in the prof's room to-night, and it will certainly take place."

"What will we do?"

"Pin up his sheets."

"Yes, and the blankets."

"Stick pins in the pillow-cases."

"Sow the floor with carpet-tacks."

"Put red pepper in his stove."

"Hold on, you fellows," cried Gilbert. "How are you going to do all this? Winder keeps his door locked?"

"Generally," observed Jimmy; "but I have swiped the key and mean to take advantage of it."

"Bully for you!"

"Won't we give him a picnic?"

"Hurrah for Jimmy Grimes!"

"Thanks, boys, thanks; but then, it's not often that I get left."

"When shall we fix up things?" asked Walter.

"As soon as the coast is clear."

"There he goes now," said Will, who had stationed himself at the window.

The boys looked out and saw Winder going down the walk, bound for the town.

"Now's our time," said Jimmy, and then they all adjourned to the professor's sleeping-apartment.

They got in, owing to Jimmy's precaution of purloining the key, and then, while one boy was set to keep watch for Winder's return, the others went to work.

They pinned his sheets together, top, bottom and sides.

Then they pinned the top blanket to the sheets as firmly as pins would hold them.

The counterpane was then secured to the blanket in the same fashion.

After that the whole business was made fast to the mattress.

When Winder went to open that bed, previous to retiring, he would have a dandy job of it and no mistake.

Then those gentle youths stuck the pillow-cases full of pins, starting them from the inside, of course.

If ever Winder put his head on those bristling pillows he would think he had struck a porcupine with all his armor on.

These several jobs took some time to accomplish, and when they were finished it was nearly dark.

Then the boys made things look all smooth and ship-shape and retired in good order, Jimmy leaving the key in the lock, whence he had abstracted it.

"I'd like to be around when the fun commences to-night," said Harry, as the boys went away.

"So you shall, my boy," said Jack. "I'm going to be there myself."

"Suppose we all take it in?"

"Won't it be jolly to see the racket he makes?"

"Let's all be on hand to see it."

"It'll be as good as a circus."

"Suppose we ask all hands to come?"

"I'll fix that, boys," said Jimmy. "It would be too bad to have any of our set miss the fun."

"Right you are, James."

The thing was kept pretty quiet until bed-time, and then only told to those who could be relied upon for discretion.

The boys all filed off to bed, and soon after the lights were supposed to be out in the rooms.

Then Jack and Jim stole out of their room half undressed, went down-stairs and made a reconnaissance.

Winder was heard moving about the room, and Jimmy rightly judged that the fun would soon be on tap.

He and Jack hurried away and warned Walter, Harry, Will, Ralph, Phil, and others that the evening's entertainment had already started.

These told others and George, Joe, Charlie, Dick, Ned, and enough to make up a dozen or fifteen soon

gathered around the door of the room where the professor did his snoozing.

They were a funny lot of boys altogether, none of them being strictly in full dress.

Some had their trousers and shirts, one or two had on night shirts with overcoats over them, and some were wrapped in their bed clothes.

The atmosphere of the halls was not as warm as it might be, and the bare legged contingent wished they had come better prepared.

However, they would not leave now on any account, fearing to miss the best part of the show.

"Thunder and guns! What's that?" they heard Winder say from inside.

"Sh!" said Jimmy, putting his eye to the keyhole.

"Confound that plaguey chambermaid; she ought to be fired out."

Then they heard the professor tearing around like a mad bull.

"Can you see anything?" whispered Jack.

"Give a fellow a show," said Harry.

"What's he doing now?"

"Ouch! the thing is full of pins!"

"Pshaw! We're losing all the fun," muttered Walter.

Just then, however, along came Tommy, arrayed in bare legs, shirt, overcoat, and fur cap, dragging a plethoric trunk after him.

"Here's what'll do the business," he remarked.

"Good boy, Tommy," whispered Jimmy, taking possession of the trunk and setting it on end close to the door.

There was a fanlight over the door, and it was open, which accounted for the boys hearing so well what was going on within.

Jimmy jumped upon the trunk, his head coming on a level with the open transom.

"Sh! he's trying to open the bed."

"Gosh blast the thing. What's the matter with it?" roared Winder.

Then the boys all began to laugh.

"There, he's giving things a rip," said Jimmy, like a lecturer explaining a panorama to an audience.

"Great guns! I'd like to know who did all this."

Then the professor began to dance, having stepped on a full-fledged carpet-tack.

Rip.

"He's making things fly," chuckled Jimmy. "There goes half a paper of pins."

"Jehosaphat! Jerusalem! ouch!"

"He's struck another snag," whispered Jimmy.

Then that motley crowd began to laugh, hold its sides, giggle, choke and otherwise express its appreciation of the fun going on just beyond.

"He's rushing around like a bull at sight of a red flag," said Jimmy. "Hello! there goes something."

It was a small stand full of books that Winder had run against, and over it went with a crash.

"Dash the thing! I won't stay another night in this house."

"What's he doing now, Jim?"

"I say, old man, give some one else a show, won't you?"

"Fellow citizens," said Jimmy, on the trunk, turning around and facing the delighted audience around the door, "the next thing on the bill—"

"Darn the whole business anyhow!"

That was Winder who had ripped everything off the bed and tossed the whole pile on the floor.

"I won't stand any more of this nonsense, I'll move out, I'll—"

"Crash, bang, splash!"

"That was the washstand!" laughed Jimmy, taking a peep through the fanlight.

"Much damage?" asked Jack, with a grin.

"Wet all the floor and the bed besides."

"Say, give us a show, won't you?" asked Walter, for the fifth time.

"Yes, let some one else have a chance."

"I can see him rushing around like a wild animal," remarked Tommy, with his eye glued to the keyhole.

Then there was more racket inside as Winder overturned a chair, and the boys all laughed.

"Some of you fellows take a peep," said Jimmy, as he got down.

Walter took his place on the trunk, and at the first glance began to laugh uproariously.

"Good heavens! what a wreck! You'd think there had been an earthquake."

"I'll make somebody sweat for this," roared Winder, as he put his bare foot in a pool of water, and ejaculated some naughty expressions.

The boys were having lots of fun, and all wanted to change places with Walter.

They forgot their discretion entirely, and laughed long and loud when their mate at the transom described Winder's antics.

When Jimmy got off the trunk, he drew Jack aside, unnoticed, and said:

"I say, side partner, let's mosy. It will be altogether too warm for us in a few moments."

Then they skipped out, leaving the others to enjoy the fun alone.

PART XXII.

WHEN Jimmy Grimes, Jr. had come down off the trunk in front of Winder's door, he had been wise in his generation.

The reason for his evacuation of his post was not entirely because he wanted to let some other boy see the show.

That was one reason, but not the principal one.

He had another, far more impressive and urgent.

While piping off Winder, he had seen the professor catch a glance at him out of the corner of his eye.

Then he knew that the fun was about to take a turn on the other side of the house.

He wasn't sure if Winder had recognized him or not, but that did not matter.

He had seen a boy and that was quite enough to give him an inkling of the whole business.

The sight of a mischievous boy aroused the professor in the same way that a red petticoat excites a cow's husband.

Jimmy knew that there was trouble in store, and that's why he so readily gave up his good position.

Then he warned his cousin and both skipped off, entirely unnoticed.

After catching sight of Jimmy, though he did not recognize him, Winder began edging toward the door, so as not to arouse the suspicion of the boys.

He tore around a bit, and made a lot of noise, just on purpose to put the boys off their guard.

Then, when the uproar outside was at its height, he suddenly seized the longest and strongest rattan in his collection and made a dash for the door.

"Cheese it, here he comes!" cried Tommy.

"Scatter boys, he's after us," hissed Walter.

Too late.

Winder yanked open that door in a second and made a charge.

Over went the trunk landing Walter on his face in the hall.

Then how that rattan did cut and slash among those boys.

The first thing the most of them knew was Winder's sudden appearance among them, in his shirt and trousers, and accompanied by a big rattan.

Whack!

Slash!

Swish!

"Clear out of this, you young imps of darkness!"

Then he lifted Harry a foot from the floor with his big foot, and cut and slashed right and left.

Such a sprawling and falling and scattering as there was!

"Ow!"

"Ouch!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Scamper, you young Turks!"

What a howling and bawling and screaming then took place in that corridor.

Everybody got a slice of that rattan, and some of them got an extra cut.

It had been fun for the boys before, but now the circus was in another lot.

Bare legs, thinly-clad shoulders, unprotected calves and unreinforced rears suffered considerably in that fracas.

"I'll teach you to play tricks on me, confound you!"

Then the lesson went right on, the big rattan being the principal book of instruction.

"Ow, that hurts!"

"Great Scott, let up!"

"Cheese it, fellows!"

"Get up, you're on my legs!"

What a tangle of legs and arms there was as the boys tried to escape.

They fell over each other, knocked one another down, and got into a terrible mess.

Winder went right on with the lesson, however, and slashed away indiscriminately, not caring whom he hit, so long as he hit some one.

Walter, Harry and Phil managed to escape with few cuts, but the others were not so fortunate.

Finally Will Sinclair rolled up the bed quilt that he had worn as an ulster, and sent it flying at Winder's head.

The irate professor got entangled in it, fell down, kicked and squirmed a good deal before he could get up, and thus gave the boys a chance to get off.

Fortunately for them he had left his glasses in his room when he made that sortie, and could not recognize any of his tormentors.

But then there was Tommy's trunk.

Fatty was in luck again, for he could be identified if no one else could.

Winder collared the trunk, took it into his room, and then proceeded to cool off.

"I've warmed some of their jackets for them," he muttered, "and I'll warm them again when I find out who they are."

"I am sure of Wright, anyhow, and he'll have a dose to-morrow, and if he don't give the rest away, I'll skin him, the young viper."

"It's no use making any complaint. The doctor always blames me and takes their part. I'll manage my own case, and if I don't whale them for this last affair, I'll never use a rattan again."

Tommy did get a thrashing the next day, sure enough, but no amount of caning would make him tell who the boys were that had played the trick on the professor.

He said he didn't know and he stuck to it, no amount of pounding being able to make him speak.

As a matter of fact he did not know who did the pinning, for he was not present when it was done and knew nothing about it.

He could have told what boys were outside the door but he didn't, and Winder hammered away at him till he was very weary.

Tommy stood his licking like a little man, and never gave anything away, and at last Winder got tired and let up on him, convinced that nothing could be learned from that source.

"He might pound away all night and I wouldn't tell," remarked Tommy, as he left the professor's presence. "He's nothing but a duffer, and it'll be a cold day when I tell him anything."

The other boys in the scrape got off without any further punishment, though Winder did his best to discover who they were.

The racket had aroused some of the professors, but they did not bother to go and see what it was as they presumed it must be Winder in one of his tantrums

and they did not care to leave their warm beds simply to go to his assistance.

Of course, Jack and Jim kept mum about the manner in which they had escaped a caning, and the others supposed that the cousins had had their share of it, a belief which the two plotters did not take the trouble of denying.

The next day Winder made it hot for some of the boys, but Jack and Jim behaved like two painted cherubs, and managed to get through without a single whack.

"Winder got the best of us on that racket last night," remarked Walter to the cousins, "and we ought to pay him up for it."

"So we ought, old fellow, but not just at present."

"Why not?"

"Because he will be on the lookout for us and fetch us up standing at the first indication of trouble."

"Well, then, I suppose we'd better wait."

"That's where you've got it solid."

Jimmy was bound to work up some rig on the professor, however, on his own account, and say nothing to the boys about it.

When school was over in the afternoon Winder had business in his class-room, which would detain him or half an hour or more.

Some of the boys had failed in their lessons and he was going to hear them over, so as to make those youths more careful.

As Jimmy passed along the hall on his way out doors, he saw Winder's big overshoes standing by the hat-rack in quiet repose.

"Get on to the coffins," he remarked. "Blowed if I didn't think they were register poles at first."

He looked at the colossal shoes for a few moments, and then was struck with an idea.

It did not hurt him, though, for he grinned all over his face.

Then he went up to his room with a hop, skip and jump, full of his new idea.

He fished out a waxed end and a big needle used for sewing buttons on his shoes, and then returned to the hall.

On his way thither he met Jack, who saw by the look on his face that something was up.

"You've got a snap, Jim," said Jack. "What is it?"

"A quiet little rubber, my boy. See the point?"

and Jimmy gave Jack a taste of the needle.

"No, but I feel it," said Jack, jumping back. "What do you mean by a quiet little rubber? Are you going to play cards?"

"No, but I'll euchre Winder, and play the rubber, too, or the rubbers, I might say."

"Oh, nonsense, give it to me straight."

Jimmy led the way along the hall till he reached the front door, pointed to Winder's galoshes, and said:

"Do you see those little shoes?"

"Yes, not being blind," laughed Jack. "Ain't they cunning?"

"As the prof. himself, old man."

"Then watch me."

Thereupon Jimmy knotted his waxed end, passed the needle through the heel of one of the rubbers twice and made another knot.

"Well, what next?" asked Jack, his curiosity being awakened.

Jimmy then put his thread through the heel of the second rubber and made it fast, leaving about six inches to spare.

Then he cut the thread and left the rubbers close to the rack, tucking the thread under so that it would not be noticed.

"Now you just watch the larks that Winder has when he puts on those shackled rubbers."

"But he'll pick 'em up first, and then he'll see the snap."

"No, sir, he always drives his feet into them while they're on the floor."

"Well, they're big enough for that."

"That's what I'm reckoning on."

Then the two conspirators skipped just far enough away not to be suspected of complicity in the snap and awaited developments.

In due time along came the professor rigged for going out, all but his rubbers.

"H'm! I wonder if I'll need 'em?" he muttered, looking down at the giant overshoes.

"Two to one we're left," whispered Jack to Jim, when he heard this remark.

"Don't be too previous, my son," replied Jimmy, who had not yet given up the schooner.

Then Winder picked up the shoes together and started toward the door.

"I tell you the shoe is on the wrong foot," whispered Jack.

Jimmy was almost willing to sell out his share in that snap for little or nothing, though he held his peace.

Winder opened the door, looked out, and saw that it was very slushy under foot.

"H'm! I'll have to put 'em on after all," remarked the professor.

Then he deposited those gunboats on the top of the stoop, side by side, and proceeded to shove his feet into them.

None are so blind as those who forget their eye-glasses.

This was the professor's case, for his second pair of eyes was at that moment resting tranquilly on his desk in his class room.

Fortune favors the impudent or the brave, which is all the same, and that is how Jack and Jim escaped detection.

Winder's feet went into those gum shoes with a thud and then the feet themselves took a step forward.

Bang! went the front door, and then Winder started to go down the stoop.

So he did, for a fact, but not in the dignified manner usual to one of his position.

He struck out briskly with his right foot and immediately yanked the left one after it.

The cable connecting those two goloshes was in good working order and didn't snap for a cent.

"Good Lord! what's the matter?"

Winder felt his left foot slipping and tried to plant it more firmly on the stoop.

That caused the right one to fly back, and then the professor sat down forcibly on the edge of the top step.

It was a ragged edge for him, and he slipped, struck the next step, and then went sliding down to the bottom.

"Ugh! Great Scott!"

He sat down in a puddle of slush at the foot of the last step, and felt a cold chill go all the way up his spine.

Jack and Jim had not missed any of the fun, for they had rushed to a convenient side window the minute they heard the door slam.

Consequently they saw Winder's terrific slide for life, and enjoyed it immensely.

"Beats the circus, eh?"

"Takes the shine off of everything."

"He's got those rubbers on yet."

"Then there'll be more fun."

And so there was, for as Winder got up and started off again, those manacled rubbers had something to say about it.

They checked his progress and down he went, legs and arms flying, and landed in six inches of mud and slush.

One of the rubbers came off, but the other remained true to its allegiance.

"Plague take the whole business," cried Winder, as he got up.

His hat lay on the ground about six feet away, and he stepped toward it.

As he did so the rubber he had lost followed him.

Then he raised his right foot from the ground a foot or more when the left rubber dangled in the air, suspended from the right.

"Jumping Jehosaphat! No wonder!"

The little snap was now as plain as the moon on a cloudless night.

"Who in thunder has been playing me such a shabby trick?"

Then he kicked off the other rubber and examined both, holding them in his hands.

He thought he could snap that thread, and gave it a regular old-fashioned yank.

"Ouch!" he yelled, as the thread cut into his fingers. "I didn't suppose it was as stout as that."

Then he tried again, being as obstinate as a mule, but with no better success.

In fact, he lost his balance, went over backwards, cleared all the slush away for a space of six feet, and got as mad as a batter.

Then he went into the house, got a knife, disconnected the rubbers, and set out once more on his perambulations.

"Never had so much fun since I had my teeth filled," laughed Jimmy.

"That just takes the ulster off of the chestnut," added Jack.

"And we didn't get left, either, eh, old pard?"

"We were on board when the train started, you can bet your boots."

Winder did his best to discover the author of that little joke, but the perpetrators were too much too sudden for him.

He could not find out the secret any more than an elephant can climb a tree.

Consequently he soon gave up the task, but resolved to make the lives of the boys under his charge more wearisome than ever, as a salve to his wounded feelings.

Just about that time Clarence concluded to try another of his scientific experiments.

He had been reading up again, and had seen, somewhere, that a hot brick placed at the foot of one's bed was a good preventive of cold feet.

"I snuff a vewy much from cold feet myself," he observed, "and I will try the expewiment. It can't do any harm, you know."

That evening after supper he met Smoke in the hall, and said:

"Smoke, me deah boy, I wequiah a heated bwick, a vewy hot bwick, you undahstand?"

"Yas'r, yo' wants a hot brick," said Smoke, wondering what was coming next.

"Can you pwocuah one faw me, me deah fellah?"

"Yas'r, I sticks one in de fiah, an' git him hot as yo' like."

"That's the vewy thing, Smoke, deah boy. Bwing it to me in my woom, when I am about to wetiah."

"Yo' want it when you're gwine to bed?"

"Yas, deah boy."

"All right, Marse Clarence, I fetch 'em."

Clarence generally spent the evening in his own room, not being bound by the same rules as the boys, and this night was no exception.

He spent the time reading and smoking and had forgotten all about his hot brick when it came time to go to bed.

In fact, he got tired and sleepy some time before his usual hour, and concluded to turn in and get a good night's rest.

He therefore disrobed, arrayed himself in a dizzy night shirt, turned down the light and composed himself to sleep.

Now, although Clarence had forgotten about his brick, Smoke had not, and, just before the boys started to go up-stairs, he took it from the kitchen range where he had left it, and started for Clarence's room.

A long nap on top of a hot stove had made that brick pretty middling hot, and although Smoke had

put an old piece of carpet around it, he thought it was pretty heavy by the time he had reached the door of the study room.

"Golly! dat yer brick am too hot fo' dis chile to handle," he cried, dropping it on a bench just outside the door. "Guess I get some mo' ol' rags ter put roun' it."

Then he went back to the kitchen, and in the meantime Winder came along on his way to his room.

He saw the brick laying on the bench, and wondered what it was doing there.

"More of those boys' tricks, I suppose," he growled, picking up the brick for the purpose of carrying it o.d.

The carpet had fallen down and Winder caught hold of that superheated brick by its unprotected top.

He did not lift it more than six miles from the bench, before he dropped it in a hurry.

"Whew! Who in time heated that brick?" and he stuck his scorched fingers in his mouth to try and allay the pain.

"If I catch the fellow that put that brick there, I'll make him sit on it till it cools off," he growled. "It's about time these tricks were put a stop to."

Just then the school-room doors opened, and the boys came hurrying out.

Winder got out of the way, and among the last to come out were Jack, Jim, and Gilbert.

"Hallo, is this your property, Jack?" asked Harry, seeing the brick and picking it up, handed it to Jack.

It had cooled off somewhat, but was still warm enough to make Harry want to drop it before he had held it many seconds.

"Great Caesar!" he yelled, as he let the thing fall into Jack's hands. "I don't want any more bricks."

Jack caught the brick on the palms of his hands, and felt as if he had got a licking right away.

"Holy smoke! it's red hot," he yelled, putting it back on the bench mighty sudden.

"What's the matter?" asked Jimmy, laughing.

"Is that one of your tricks, Jim?" asked Jack.

"What is it?"

"Leaving that hot brick on the bench?"

"No," laughed Jimmy, "I wouldn't play any such trick on my chums."

"Then how the mischief did it come there?"

"Ask me something easier."

At that moment along came Smoke with a piece of extra thick brussels carpet with which to handle that cube of clay.

"Wha' yo' do wif dat brick, Marse Jim?" he asked, as he saw Jimmy nosing around it. "Don' yo' tech it, 'cause it am berry hot."

"So we found out," laughed Jack.

"What's it for?" asked Jimmy.

"Marse Clarence done tol' me he want a hot brick when he go to bed. Reckon he wanten put it at him feet."

"I'll take it up to him," said Jim. "Give me its overcoat, so I won't burn my hands."

"Yo' take it up to Marse Clarence?"

"Yes."

"Dat sabe me de trouble of gwine up."

Jimmy wrapped the brick up and ascended with it to Clarence's room, followed by Jack.

When they entered the dude's apartments they found him in bed and asleep.

"Guess he must have forgotten about it," whispered Jack.

"Then I'll make him remember it," laughed Jim, softly. "Turn up the light."

When the room was illumined, Jack lifted up the bed clothes at the foot of the bed, while Jimmy shoved in the brick, close to Clarence's bare feet, covered them up again and got out in good order.

Jack turned down the light, and followed Jim, the dude still snoozing calmly on.

Presently the brick began to get in its fine work which Clarence assisted by stretching out his feet till they pressed against it.

They had not been there ten seconds before Clarence awoke with a start, having dreamt that he was walking over hot coals after the manner of the good men of old.

"Faw mawcy sakes!" he yelled, "the house must be on fiah!"

"Baw Jove! It's wathaw wawm, don't ye know." Then he let it fall, and, of course, was lucky enough to drop it on his toes.

"Oh, Lawd! the howld thing has cut my foot off, I feel shuah!"

He hopped about on one foot, holding the other in his hands, and making more faces than a monkey with the measles.

During his gymnastic peregrinations he set his good foot on top of the brick, which seemed to have an unusual attraction for him.

The way he jumped up would have done credit to a jumping-jack, but the way he came down was enough to make a bullfrog shed tears.

He landed solidly on his after deck in the middle of the room with force enough to make the windows rattle.

"Oh, deah, my spinal column is bwoken all to pieces, and I have fwacchawed my leg, I know I have."

"What's the matter, Toughy?" asked Jimmy, entering the room at that moment.

"Putting down carpets, Clarence?" added Jack, following close behind, "and driving tacks with your backbone?"

"No, me deah boy, I twod on a bwick and the howld object threw me down. I am afwaid I have wupchawed an awtewy aw something aw othaw."

"How do you happen to be walking about in such scanty apparel, anyhow?"

"Because the bwick thwreatened to set fah to the bed, don't ye know, and it blistawed my feet and so I got up."

"You don't mean to say you had a red-hot brick in your bed?" exclaimed Jack, with charming innocence.

"Yas, deah boy."

"What for, in the name of common sense?" asked Jimmy, equally guileless.

"To pwevent cold feet, deah boy."

"And your room is heated by steam already and can be made as hot as an oven."

"But I do have cold feet, deah boy."

"And you put that scorching hot brick in your bed? Well, that takes the frescoe off the ceiling," and Jimmy laughed as if to split.

"Aw, if I wemembah, I didn't put it in aftah all," muttered Clarence, setting his thinking machine to work.

"Why, you just said you did," said Jack, shoving the brick over on to the hearth where it could not burn anything.

"Yas, but now I wemembah that I didn't. That young wascal Smoke must have put it in. I will pull his eah faw him. Why, I might have been wosted."

"Pretty good roast as it is, eh, Jack?" said Jimmy, aside.

"Regular barbecue, my Christian friend."

By this time Clarence had discovered that he was neither maimed, mangled, nor seriously hurt, and concluded to get up off the floor and go back to bed.

"Vewy kind of you, I'm shaw, to come to inquiah, deah boys," he said, "but I find that I am all wight, aftah all, and I wish you a vewy good night and pleasant dweams."

"Same to you, Fitzzy old boy, and don't go to pounding down any more of the plastering, as I think the dear doc might object."

"Tra-la-la, Jonesy old tough. I'd make Smoke sit on that brick if I were you."

Then the boys left the dude to continue his slumbers, and went off to their own room to laugh over this latest racket.

About this time the boys of Dr. Bircham's educational establishment concluded to give an entertainment for their own benefit in the great school-room, and invite their friends in the town to attend at so much a head.

The money obtained from admissions was to go toward buying a boat for the school rowing club, new uniforms, bats and other paraphernalia for the baseball nine, and otherwise encourage athletic sports.

The boys asked the doctor about it, and the worthy man consented to the exhibition being given, provided they gave the spectators a good show for their money.

"Oh, the show will be first-class," said Jimmy, who, of course, was one of the managers. "We have lots of talent in the school, doctor."

"You mustn't let your rehearsals interfere with your studies. I have known principals who had their boys give more time to school exhibitions than they did to their lessons."

"We'll look after that, sir," said Jack, he being on the committee who called on the doctor.

"Very well then, go ahead. I hope that your entertainment will be a success, and you can count on myself and family being present."

"We'll just make the thing the boss show of the season," said Jack to the others, when they were consulting about the programme, "and if you'll take my advice, you'll let Jim have the whole management of the affair. What he don't know about such things isn't worth thinking of."

"Oh, I'll get up a daisy show if you fellows will only help me," said Jimmy. "This isn't the first one I've run. Do you remember the one at home, last year, Jack?"

"When the Dutchman played General Georgy Wash and Clarence went home in his knee breeches? Well, I should simper."

"Wasn't that a bully performance, all around?"

"You can gamble your galoshes it was."

Jimmy, being given the sole management of the affair, proceeded to hunt up the best talent that was to be found in the school, so as to arrange a suitable programme.

Many of the boys had good singing voices, and a fine

double quartette was organized to sing a number of glees and choruses.

Master Tommy, fat and clumsy, and unlucky though he was, possessed a remarkably clear and sweet boy soprano voice, and he was given a good place on the programme, which tickled him mightily.

"You might let me exhibit my tame mice," he said, confidentially, to Jimmy. "They're real clever, and I've got 'em trained so that they can do lots of things."

"Wouldn't you like to give the whole show yourself, Thomas?" asked Jim, with a grin.

"Guess you don't know what those mice of mine can do," said Tommy, elevating his Hibernian. "Just let me show you once and you'll say it's no slouch."

"That's all right, my obese fellow-citizen, but I can't make the show too long."

"I'll only take ten minutes," pleaded Tommy, anxious enough to show off his pets.

"All right, Fatty, I'll see your show first and then see if I can put you on. Will that satisfy you?"

"Of course," and Tommy's fat face gleamed like a beacon in a fog.

In fact, Jimmy's trouble did not seem to be in not getting talent enough, but in knowing how to condense it all into the limits of a two-hours-and-a-half entertainment.

Tommy being disposed of, for Jim saw and liked his wild animal show, our young hero set his thinking powers to going to know how to rope Clarence into the affair.

Much to his surprise and delight, the dude helped him out of his dilemma most amazingly.

"Wouldn't you like to take part in our exhibition, Clarence?" he asked that dandy masher, one day not long before the entertainment was to be given.

"Yas, deah boy, I should be delighted," said Clarence, with surprising promptness, "and I was about to ask you, don't ye know."

"Delighted to hear it," said Jim, with a grin. "Won't you give us a recitation or a song?"

"Pawhaps, deah boy, but I would pwefaw to give an exhibition of pawlah magic, don't ye know."

"Why, are you a magician, Clarence?" asked Jimmy, very much surprised.

"I am a pwacticed pwestidigitatah, me dear fellah," exclaimed Clarence, getting over the mastadonic word without even a slip or a stumble.

"You don't say!"

"Yas, deah boy; I have been pwacticing how to pawfowm twicks faw some time, don't you know, and I wequiah but little appawatus and no assistant, deah boy."

"Really, now?" and Jimmy's surprise was the real, genuine, bona-fide, simon pure, unadulterated article, with no flies on it.

"Oh, yes, I have a book that tells how to do all sorts of tricks, and I can pawfowm vewy many of them with weal success, me deah fellah."

"Why, that'll be boss, Clarence, and a real novelty. May I put you down on the bill for an exhibition of magic?"

"Yas, me deah fellah; but you must say pwestidigitatation, don't ye know, faw that is much maw pwopah."

"Mr. Jones in his exposition of prestidigitatation—that'll sound bully," said Jimmy, enthusiastically.

"Couldn't you say Mistah Fitz Woy? That would sound maw elegant, don't ye know, than just Mistah Jones. I think I shall ask pawmission of the leglachaw to altah it, me deah fellah. Fitz Woy sounds twuly English, ye know."

"And awfully snobbish, don't ye know?" laughed Jim to himself.

So it was settled that Clarence was to contribute a seance of parlor necromancy as his share of the exhibition, and both he and Jimmy were very much elated.

"I'll bet two cents to a dollar that the dude makes a mess of it," thought the young scamp, "but that'll be all the better, for we're bound to have some fun out of the thing, I reckon."

"I declah," mused Clarence, "this will be the greatest twiumph of my life, don't ye know. I feel alweady as if I could heah the cheahs of an admiring cwoud."

Then Jimmy went ahead with his arrangements, got the programme into shape, drilled the boys in their parts, hired music, had the school-room decorated, and was as busy as a beaver for three or four days.

He was too much occupied to work off any rackets on Winder. Clarence, or Smoke, being up to his eyelids in business from the crow of the cock till the bell clanged for all lights out in the rooms.

Jack and Harry gave him all the assistance they could, and between the three of them the affair promised to be a glittering and a bewildering success.

When the eventful evening arrived the big school-room was packed to its utmost squeezing capacity, and Jack proposed letting out the chandeliers and cornices for reserved places.

The room was brilliantly lighted and very tastefully decorated, reflecting great credit on the youthful managers.

All the town was present, and the boys not taking part had front seats, many of them bringing their best girls along.

The doctor and his family and household had good seats, the professors were not left out, and Winder, in a bang-up suit of clothes and a brand new, very glossy high silk hat beamed on the crowd like a middle-aged Adonis in spectacles.

All the pretty girls, all the high-tone of the town, all the respectable, rolling-in-wealth men of the place, and all the giddy old maids and rollicking boys were present.

It was a first-class crowd, and every member of it had planked down his little quarter to come in, being

proud to encourage anything that emanated from Dr. Bircham's celebrated temple of learning.

On the platform were a big piano, music stands, a number of chairs, big vases of flowers, potted plants, and a little table covered with a velvet cloth, to be used by Clarence when it came his turn to appear.

A big and very gorgeous Japanese screen at the rear of the platform, hid the performers from sight and, promptly at the hour named, Jimmy stepped out, arrayed in a dizzy dress suit, and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the agony will now be let loose, and we trust that you will all have a hilarious time, and fully appreciate our efforts to please and likewise to scoop in the ducats for the benefit of our boat club. The double quartette of male voices will now howl."

Then he skipped back out of sight, the piano fiend took his place at the instrument, rattled off a few chords, and then out came Jack, Jim, Walter, Harry, Tom and Dick Marble, Tommy Wright, looking as jolly as Santa Claus himself, and Will Sinclair.

The boys perpetrated two or three glees in lively style, and then gave way to a comic recitation by Phil Sutton, which collared the cracker, Phil being as amusing as a yellow pup.

Then Master Tommy, with that up-and-up church steeple soprano voice of his, Susie Marble with her rich contralto, and her brothers, Tom and Dick, as bass and tenor, just tickled the soles and busted the kid gloves of that audience with an operatic selection, the demands for more going away ahead of the supply.

Two or three encores were given, and then Tommy did himself proud in a duet with Susie, though he blushed like a whole field full of poppies at having to stand up before that mob with such a pretty girl as Susie Marble by his side.

They were forced to give another song together, and then Tommy came out alone, very much elated and not a little scared, and got off some vocal sky-rockets with that phenomenal voice of his that would throw all your high-priced sopranos into the shade.

"Faix, that's pretty good singin'," but I believe I can aquil it," piped up a shrill voice, with a regular moss-coated brogue attachment at the rear of the hall.

Everybody turned around to look, and then down the main aisle came a funny little old Irishwoman whom not a soul in the place seemed to know.

She had on regular beetle crushers of brogans that clattered as she walked like oversed-castanets. She wore a green calico dress with a flowered overskirt, tucked up behind a la washerwoman, a little plaid shawl around her shoulders and on her head a big white cap with frills, so big and floppy that her round, rosy face, looked like the center of some enormous white daisy.

On her arm was a little basket, in which were a miscellaneous collection of apples, oranges, candy and peanuts, which she had probably brought into the hall for financial reasons.

"It's a foine v'ce yez have, me boy," she continued, walking right up the aisle toward the platform, "but I can aquil me tuck and sing ye something better than yer Eyetalian fandangoes."

Poor Tommy fled behind the screen in great alarm as the fantastic creature approached the platform, and all the audience looked astonished.

"Let me up there wanst, leddies and gentlemon, and I'll show ye what singin' s," continued the comical object, as she trudged up the platform steps.

"You can't come up here, ma'am," cried Jack, hurrying out from behind the screen. "This is a private exhibition."

"How dar' ye say I can't come up whin I am up, ye young whipper-shnapper. Go on out av that, or I'll give yez a clout over the head."

"But you can't stay here, I tell you," persisted Jack. "Boys, Smoke, Clarence, come help me put this woman out."

"My good woman, you must not interrupt the concert," said the doctor mildly, rising in his seat.

"Interrupt thim, is it?" cried the woman, stepping to the front like a little man, "faix it's carryin' them an that I'll be doin'. Here, ye musicianer at the pany, give us a chune, or catch this wan if ye can."

Then to the surprise of all in the house, to the evident consternation of Jack and his aids, and to the amusement of the pianist, the little old woman advanced and began to sing to a lively tune, the following:

"Between you and me, I've something to say,
Me name's Katy Rooney, from over the way,
Wherever I go many strange things I see,
And I'll tell yez about thim, between you and me."

Then came a few lively steps of a rattling jig which set everybody's feet to moving.

"Between you and me there's a dude in this school,
And some of yez thinks he's only a fool,
Masther Clarence is not over wise I'll agree,
Though he's learnin' the ropes, between you and me."

Mrs. Katy then rattled off some more steps, making those big brogans stir up the liveliest kind of a dust.

"Between you and me, there's a boy they call Tommy
That they never should let go away from his mammy."

For he and bad luck go together, I see,
And he's always in trouble, between you and me."

After this there was the biggest kind of a breakdown, till it seemed as if the platform would give way.

"Between you and me, Dr. Bircham's academy
I'll say is the best, and that isn't bad o' me.
The doctor's a trump, so genial and free,
Long life to him, boys, between you and me."

The audience now began to catch on to the idea that this was a part of the programme, and though her identity was still a puzzle, the little old Irishwoman was cheered till the roof rang again.

She started to leave the platform, but the company wouldn't have it, and demanded more of the same sort she had already given them.

"Faix, I could ye—I could sing," she piped up, coming forward, "though yez wouldn't believe it first off. Well, thin, what d'ye think av this?"

"Between you and me, there's a man in this school That wallops the byes away beyond rule. He belts 'em, he licks 'em, he whacks 'em with glee,

But they don't seem to like t, between you and me."

There was a regular Indian war-whoop at this, for every one knew who was meant, and Winder looked as if he would like to put his favorite theory of the efficacy of rattan oil for unruly boys into immediate practice.

"More!" yelled the boys, eager for any fun that might be adroit.

"More, is it?" said the Irishwoman. "Faix, ye're all as bad as Oliver; but I'll give it to yez, if ye must have it.

"Between you and me there's a bye they call Jack, He's the first trump card and bates the whole pack. But he's nothin' widout his partner, ye see, They're faine boys, Jack and Jim, between you and me."

Then the little Irishwoman suddenly whisked off her big cap, red wig and little shawl, and that jolly young joker, Jimmy Grimes, Jr. stood revealed.

There were roars of laughter, cheers, stamping and clapping of hands, and though Jimmy had retreated behind the screen the audience seemed determined to have him out again.

Presently he appeared in full evening dress as before, with the red paint washed off his face and looking his own familiar self.

As he came forward the music struck up again, and advancing to the edge of the platform, he sang:

"Between you and me I don't think it's right To keep one man singing the rest of the night. It ain't fair to the rest, it ain't fair to me, So I guess I'll keep quiet, between you and me."

Then they let him off, and the show went on, all hands being in the best possible humor.

Recitations, comic and serious, songs, choruses and ballads, instrumental and vocal solos, were given in rapid succession, and then Tommy introduced his white mice, making them go through all sorts of exercises, marching like soldiers, firing guns, ringing bells, drawing water, dancing quadrilles and playing leap frog, all of which they did to perfection, Tommy being a first-class trainer, though hardly up to snuff in other things.

The exhibition was very much liked, and Tommy got lots of applause and felt as proud as a live king on a real gilded throne.

Then the boys sang again, and after that Jim came out and said:

"Ladies and fellow victims! By your kind permission, Mr. Clarence Fitz Roy, which his everyday name is Jones, the celebrated amateur magician, will now entertain you with a few feats of legerdemain or prestidigitation, known in the United States language as sleight of hand."

Then Jimmy retired and Clarence, gotten up to paralyze in a full-dress suit, four-story-and-mansard-roof collar, white choker, single eye-glass, button-hole bouquet and patent leathers, came out from behind the screen and made his bow.

"I will fawst twy some simple twicks, ladies and gents," said Clarence, bringing his little table forward, "and then pwoceed to show you some maw swikwing illusions."

Then Clarence juggled with a pack of cards, caught quarter-dollars on the fly, took them out of peoples' noses and mouths, and fished them from other unexpected places, took a whole infant's wardrobe out of a straw hat, and made flowers grow instantaneously on the coat lapels of three or four of the boys.

"I will now pawfawn the celebrated hat twick, which will conclude my pawt of the entertainment. Will some gentleman kindly loan me a silk hat?"

There was no response to this little request, and Clarence stepped down off the platform and began to look around.

Then he espied that very recent, excessively shiny silk dicer of Professor Winder's.

"Ah, pwofessah, would you be so kind as to loan me yaw hat faw a few minutes?" asked Clarence, smiling like a whole wood-yard of chips.

"What do you want it for?" growled Winder, glaring at Clarence through his glasses.

"So as to pawfawn a twick, me deah saw."

"No, sir; no tricks with my hat, if you please."

"But I won't hawt it, ye know. It will be weturned just as I get it, I asshaw you. It is meahly an optical illusion, don't ye know?"

"Let him have it, professor," said the doctor, smiling: "It's all right."

Winder gave up the hat unwillingly, but followed Clarence up on to the platform in order to be sure that everything was all right.

The dude magician placed the hat on the little table, top down, and then took a little wand and began to make mysterious passes with it over the dicer.

"What's that idiot going to do now?" thought Winder, watching the proceedings.

"I will now pwoceed to make an omelette in the hat," said Clarence, producing a number of eggs from the table drawer.

"An omelette, eh? H'm! here's a pretty how-came-you-so!"

"You will obsawve that these eggs aw weal," and Clarence proceeded to break a couple of them into the hat.

"Now, what is that ass going to do?" and Winder threw a savage gleam from his big spectacles upon the magician.

"Theah is no deception heah, my fwriends, the eggs aw not twick eggs, but weal, genuine hen swuit."

Then three or four more embryo chickens were deposited in that hat.

"I shall fawst make an omelette and fwy it in the hat, and aftah that will pwoduce a bwood of little chickens. This twick has never been pawfawmed in public."

Squash! Spat!

The dude's dainty fingers dismembered half a dozen more eggs, and the contents thereof went into the hat.

The boys looked on with grins and grimaces. Winder began to appear anxious, and Clarence looked beaming.

"Now, I am weady to pawfawm the twick," said Clarence, turning back his cuffs and seizing the wand.

"Just look at that milksop. I bet he makes a mess of it."

"Pwesto, abwacadabwa, hocus pocus, change!"

Then Clarence stirred up those eggs with the wand as though his life depended on it.

The boys began to giggle, Winder gave a groan, and Clarence looked puzzled.

Then he suddenly stopped, laid down the wand, and said:

"Pon me wawd, I shall have to beg the company's pawdon, but I weally have forgotten how to pawfawm this twick. Pwofessah, heah is yaw hat."

PART XXIV.

"I HAVE weally fawgotten how to pawfawm this twick."

That's what Clarence said.

"Great Pompey's remains!"

And that's what Professor Winder ejaculated.

There stood his spick-and-span, brand-new eight-dollar silk beaver, filled to the brim with the materials for an omelette.

And there stood Clarence and deliberately announced that the trick was a failure.

It was enough to make a graven image shiver in its socks.

Was there ever such an idiot as that Clarence?

Was there ever such a mad, raving, furious wild beast as that professor?

"You infernal ass!" he hissed.

Then he made one bound, grabbed up his hat, upset the table and went for Clarence.

"You've ruined that hat; now wear it!"

Then he clapped that dicer, eggs and all, upon the dude's head.

It was too much of a fit in the first place, and Winder made it more so in a jiffy.

Right down over the dude's eyes and ears and nose he jammed it, while egg-juice squirted out in every direction.

"There, you idiot!" spluttered the wrathful Winder, fetching his ham-like hands with a bang down on the top of the hat, "how do you like my hat trick, you natural born ninny?"

"Squash!"

"Squirt!"

"F-sssh!"

Down went the dicer clear to the foundation of Clarence's choke-me-soon collar.

It was a total eclipse of the dude.

As the hat went down out squirted its contents.

Eggs right and left, eggs up and down, eggs everywhere.

They splattered all over Clarence's nobby dress suit, and made him look like an animated omelette.

No unpopular lecturer could ever boast as many egg frescoes on his clothes as Clarence could show at that moment.

The stuff ran all over his coat, gushed forth in a regular stream down his embroidered shirt front, formed a puddle in the polonaise of his waistcoat, slopped over on to the floor, and flew about in a fine spray in all directions.

Clarence struggled and kicked and danced, and it was a great wonder he wasn't choked.

"There! you great overgrown calf, get out of that the best you can."

This from Winder, as he left the platform and strode angrily down the aisle and out of the hall.

The boys yelled, howled, giggled, screamed and roared.

They hadn't had so much fun in a twelve-month.

They squirmed and kicked and rolled around in their seats in the ecstasy of their enjoyment.

However, if it was fun for them, it was no picnic for the dude.

He did his best to yank that improvised egg-cup off his head.

Try as he would, however, the dicer stuck fast.

Then Jack and Jim and two or three more came to his assistance.

"It's a shame," cried Jimmy, though he was ready to explode with suppressed mirth.

"It's an outrage," echoed Jack, equally unable to keep the laughter inside of him.

"Winder had no business to treat him so."

"Clarence would have done the trick if the prof. hadn't hurried him."

"He's the meanest man that ever was let loose on the world."

Having expressed their opinions, the boys tried to get Clarence out of the hat.

They tugged and they pulled, both at the hat and at Clarence, but without avail.

"Give me a knife," cried Jimmy. "The hat is ruined now, anyhow."

Then somebody got a big jack knife and Jimmy cut off the roof of the dicer.

"That'll give him a chance to breathe, anyhow."

So said Jack, who now grabbed the brim and pulled the thing down as far as the dude's shoulders.

But what a sight he was!

His hair was plastered with eggs and shells, his complexion was like a Chinaman's and he could scarcely open his eyes.

"Grand transformation," laughed Jimmy. "A dude turns into a chicken."

"Faw gwaculous sakes, take off this howid object," muttered Clarence, his mouth full of egg.

Jimmy had to laugh or burst, and for a few moments he was incapable of doing anything else.

Then he cut away the remains of the ruined hat and set Clarence at liberty.

"Faw Heaven's sake, get me a pail of watah."

"In the dressing-room, Clarence," laughed Jack.

"You'd better get into a tub, though, just as you are."

"Oh, deah, my dwess suit is wuined. I'd like to cwush the pwofessah faw this."

Then Clarence disappeared amid the laughter of the audience, and proceeded to clean himself off.

It took all the hot water and soap in the place to get the egg out of his hair, eyes and mouth, and as for his clothes, they were ruined beyond recovery.

"This is a digression, ladies and gentlemen," said Jimmy, after Clarence had vanished. "We have several more things on our programme, and, if you say so, we will go on."

"We've had more than our money's worth," cried one of the boys.

"Put Clarence on for a song and dance in his egg-shell suit."

"Fetch Tommy out to do a hornpipe on stilts."

"Give us some more Irish business, between you and me," cried Professor Hodson.

"Silence in the menagerie," said Jimmy. "Funny business will be confined to the performers only. Pianist, let her fly."

Then the programme was carried out to the end, it being past eleven o'clock when the concert was over, owing to numerous encores.

Everybody pronounced the whole thing a complete success, and many promised to come again if it was repeated.

"We'll see about that later," said Jimmy. "It don't always do to strike twice in the same spot. Another time we might lose all we made to-night."

The next day was Saturday, and a holiday of course, which gave the boys a chance to rest from their arduous labors of the night before.

Winder was not seen, but it was presumed that he was as mad a man as they generally make.

Poor Clarence was inconsolable, for although his dress-suit could be cleaned, it would never be the same gorgeous affair it had been, and would always remain a second-hand article, and the thought of having to wear a shabby dress-coat filled the dude's heart with sorrow unspeakable.

It was the afternoon after the racket, and the principal participants therein were down in the village dispensing their surplus cash for such things as boys most like, and seeing the sights.

"Obsawve the cuttah," said Jimmy, presently, with an admirable imitation of Clarence's manner of speaking, pointing to a funny-looking box-sleigh standing at the edge of the curb.

It was one of your old-fashioned rural affairs, was long and low, painted red, had two seats, was plentifully supplied with straw and buffalo robes, and looked not unlike a piano-box on runners.

To it was harnessed an old broken-down nag that would have been dear at five dollars, whose ribs were as plain to be seen as the slats of a clothes horse, blind in one eye and not much better in the other, with feet like butter firkins, a stump of a tail, and a habit of kicking upon the slightest provocation.

A big rope, looking like a cable, was secured to his head gear, and to the other was a solid iron weight, heavy enough to smash that nag into hash if it had ever fallen upon him.

"And get onto the trotter," laughed Jack, when Jimmy pointed out the vehicle.

"Guess that comes from Pumpkin Hollow or Beantown Crossroads," remarked Harry. "There's too much style about it to have come from the city."

"Reckon Farmer Beanpoles is in town laying in his supplies for to-morrow," said Walter.

"Yes, and here he is now," laughed Jim.

At that moment a tall, lanky, seldom-fed-looking individual in a shaggy overcoat, white slouch hat and cowhide boots, came out of a grocery store close by and approached the sleigh.

He had a demijohn under one arm, a ham under the other, and paper parcels stuck out of all his pockets.

He was chewing tobacco, his jaws going like a coffee mill.

"Gosh a'mighty, I hope I hain't furgotten nawthin," he muttered, as he put the demijohn under the seat, the ham on top, and the various and sundry parcels alongside.

"Let's have some fun with his nibs," whispered Jimmy, the boys having paused to take in the show.

"Lemme see, there's the jimmyjohn and the ham and the sugar and salt pork and tea and raisins and half a yard of caliker, and—I swan to glory ef I hain't forgot the pep'mint drops that Samantha axed me to get."

"Those are to eat in church to keep her from going to sleep," muttered Jimmy.

"No, I hain't nuther, here they be," muttered the farmer, feeling in one of his many pockets as he got into the sleigh. "Get up, Jack!"

But Jack for some reason refused to budge.

"Get up, consarn ye," growled Beanpoles, picking

up the stump of a whip and belaboring the sorry-looking animal's flanks with it.

"Build a fire under him," suggested Jim.

"Tie a knot in his tail," said Jack.

"Hitch a locomotive on in front, that's the only way you can get him to go," laughed Harry.

"Put a bag of oats in front of him," was Walter's suggestion. "He'll go for his grub if for nothing else."

"Get up, plague take ye," yelled Beanpoles, belting that unfortunate quadruped.

The latter gave a jump and a snort, let fly with his rear heels and beat a tattoo on the dash-board.

As for going ahead, however, he made about as much progress as the woman suffrage movement.

"You'll never get that mule to go," laughed Jimmy, who had taken a quiet tumble.

"I won't?" snorted Beanpoles.

"Nixey."

"I'll show yew if I won't, b'gosh."

"There's no use in belting him," laughed Jim.

"Suppose you take in your check weight."

That was just where the laugh came in.

The bucolic teamster had forgotten to take off the cable with its iron adjunct, and, of course, the nag couldn't budge.

"Wall, I swan, ef I hain't a nateral born fule,"

muttered Beanpoles. "Hey, one o' yew boys jest on-

hitch that rope, won't ye, an' chuck the weight in the sleigh?"

"Why, cert," said Jimmy, with charming alacrity.

He unhitched the rope, grabbed the anchor from the sidewalk and literally "chucked" it into the bottom of the sleigh.

Bang!

Snash!

"Get up, Jerry!"

"Gosh! Whoa! Hold up!"

In went the heavy weight with a thud and a bounce.

It narrowly missed crushing the rustic's toes to a jelly, and caromed against the demijohn.

There was a noise of shattered wicker work, broken glass, and gurgling fluids all combined.

Then Jack patted that skeleton nag in the nigh ear with a big snowball and told him to go.

Beanpoles nearly went over backward off the seat, so suddenly did his old nag start up.

Then he yelled and howled, and clutched frantically at the reins in a vain attempt to stop the brute.

He knew that something had happened to his "jim-myjohn," and he wanted to investigate then and there.

"Get up, Dobbin!" cried the boys.

Then, to insure the nag's keeping up a good rate of speed, they regularly bombarded him with snowballs.

The nag got a good many of them on his flanks, his head and his ribs, but Beanpoles did not escape by any means.

One extra sized snow pile knocked off his slouch hat, and sent it into the bottom of the sleigh.

Another plumped him right on top of his sandy head, and made it look like the top of the North Pole.

Still another went sneaking into his ear, and made him think that the winter was beginning all over again.

"Consarn yer plecter, whoa!" he yelled, drawing on the reins and trying to get that nag down to an ordinary rate of speed.

That bundle of bones rattled on, however, and Beanpoles was soon beyond the reach of the snowball fusillade, and yet he was not happy.

"Gosh all cabbage-heads! If I ketch them there boys, I'll jest warm their hides for 'em, by gravy!" he spluttered, as the sleigh went dashing along, narrowly escaping a collision with several vehicles.

"That takes the sneeze out of the snuff," commented Jimmy, as Beanpoles disappeared in the distance.

"That jug of rum of his won't be good for much when he gets home," remarked Jack.

"Oh, well, I belong to the Band of Hope, my boy, and rum must be put down."

"Old Beanpoles won't put that down, I fancy," chuckled Harry. "The demijohn was knocked into eternal smash."

"Well, I did take it rather more forcibly than I intended," laughed Jimmy. "but if he kicks I'll pay for his rum or his vinegar, whichever it was."

After Beanpoles had disappeared in his gilded chariot drawn by the fiery untamed steed, that quartette of jokers sauntered down the street on the *quint vive* for more fun.

A cigar store image made in the likeness of a dude with yellow trousers, pink vest, blue coat, high white hat and dizzy eye-glasses, presently took Jimmy's eye.

"See me plug the dude," he remarked casually, picking up a snowball and hardening it in his fists.

Then he let drive, straight for the eye of the wooden dude.

There's many a slip 'twixt the fist and the bull's eye, it has been oft remarked.

This was one of the times that the unexpected got in its fine work and knocked the intended out of time.

James, Jr., had aimed at the wooden dude in front of the cigar store.

Just at the moment, however, when the snowball was speeding to its mark, another dude, only a little less wooden-headed, came out of the cigar store.

The snowball at once showed which dude it preferred, and caught the live one right in the collar-button.

"Gweat heavens! who thwew that?"

It was Clarence who asked this question as he sat down on the sidewalk.

"What a shot, Jim!" laughed Jack.

"Better take lessons, my boy."

"I thought you could do better than that, old man."

"You fellows are all off your rollers!" exclaimed Jimmy. "The shot was a dandy."

"That won't do, old fellow."

"Didn't I say I'd hit the dude? Well, didn't I do it?"

"Yes—but Clarence isn't wooden."

"Oh, isn't he? Winder thinks he is."

Then the boys went to the assistance of Clarence, who was sitting on the sidewalk trying to discount in the weep act Old Mrs. Niobe, the woman who lost all her kids and was turned into a water-spout.

"What's the matter, Clarence?"

"Have you burst your suspenders?"

"Sitting there to cool off, Rocks?"

"Is that your favorite attitude?"

"Having your picture took, Clarence?"

Oh, they were a nice innocent lot of boys, and just captured the cruller for meekness and mildness.

"It's weal mean," sobbed Clarence. "Some howid b-boy thwew a s-snow b-ball at me, and wuined m-my n-new wed scawf, he did."

"Oh, is that all?"

"All!" gasped the dude. "I should think that was enough. It c-cost f-forty cents."

"Who did it?"

"I d-don't know, 'cause I didn't have me glawss on, don't ye know, but he's a howid fellah, whoevah he is."

"You don't think any of us would do such a thing?" asked that innocent rogue.

"Oh, no!" and Clarence was very positive on that point.

Then he arose, brushed the snow from that gaudy red scarf, relighted his cigar, and went his way, never once taking a tumble.

"It's lucky he came out just when he did," laughed Jack. "or that shot of yours would have gone through a window. You can thank Clarence for that."

"Yas, deah boy," replied Jimmy, "but I don't think Clarence would thank me for that shot if he knew where it came from."

After parting with Clarence the boys continued their walk, taking in all that was going.

Presently they came to a general dry goods store in front of which was an awning extending from the building to the sidewalk.

That is, the posts and frame were there, but the awning itself, being of sail-cloth, had been taken in for the winter.

The merchant being a man of an enterprising frame of mind, had utilized the string-pieces of the awning for advertising purposes.

Hanging from the string-pieces over the sidewalk were three or four hoopskirts labeled according to their value.

"Cheap for fifty cents." "A great bargain, only thirty-five cents." "Magnificent, twenty-five cents," were some of the legends attached to those swinging skeletons.

"Get on to Bluebeard's wives," said Jimmy, looking up.

"Nice summer overcoats they'd make," added Jack.

"I say," said Jim, quickly, "let's have a racket with these phantom petticoats."

"How?" asked all the other boys, on the lookout for something to do to make life pleasant.

"I'll show you, my children."

Then Jimmy walked to the curb and began to investigate.

He found that a cord extended from the awning posts up to the cross piece, then over and along the stringers and through an eye down to a hanger on the suspended skirts.

By letting out the cord which was fastened to the post the skirt could be lowered, and this was the case with all of them.

Jimmy explained this arrangement to his chums, and said:

"Let each of us take a post, and when I say the word let-go the halvards and down comes the skirt."

"Upon some dude's shoulders," laughed Harry.

"How did you catch on so quick?" asked Jimmy.

"You're improving, my boy."

The four boys then took up their positions, one at each post, and loosened the lines, being ready to let them go at the word.

People were constantly passing the store, and the boys were not particularly noticed, as they stood on the edge of the sidewalk.

Pretty soon a portly, pompous-looking old fossil was seen approaching, and Jim, who was on the end of the line, said, in a whisper:

"I'll take this fellow and you take the next one, Walt."

"All right, my covey."

The owner of half the town, by his looks, came stalking along, and at the proper moment Jimmy let go his line with a sudden jerk.

Down went that hoopskirt, right over the pompous man's head, the hook by which it was attached slipping off.

In an instant the fellow was walking off with a skeleton skirt hanging from his shoulders.

"Haw, haw! just look at that!" cried a country dude a few paces behind. "That's very clevah, you know."

The words were hardly spoken before Walter let go his line and down came another skirt, and the dude was caged.

"Oh, baw Jove, there's anothah!" he cried, in disgust.

Then he tried to shake the thing off, but it got as far as his waist and then stuck.

"Let her go, boys," whispered Jimmy.

Jack and Harry obeyed on the instant, and were lucky enough to catch a victim apiece.

Then they dusted, going just far enough to see the fun and yet not be suspected of having started it.

Jack caught a farmer in his mouse-trap, and Harry caged a colored gentleman of dandified appearance.

The latter did not know exactly what had happened, being interested in looking at the others.

Old Poinposity began to use bad words and try to get out of his wire prison.

The dude did not think it as funny a snap as he had at first, and began to run.

The farmer got tripped by his skirts, and measured his length on the snowy pavement.

The colored gentleman pulled his airy garment off, and wanted to draw a razor at once.

Quite a number of people had caught onto the show before this, and nearly all had something to say about it.

"Catch on to the traveling signs."

"Well, I should think Deacon Hardknutt would know better than to make a fool of himself like that."

"Young Green don't know any better, of course."

"Chain up the coon; he wants to fight."

"Get on to old Hayseed."

"It's an outrage!" puffed the deacon, getting out of his skirt and leaving it on the walk.

The dude tripped over it as he was running, and down he fell in an instant.

The farmer had got up, by this time, and he threw his skirt over the dude who was struggling to rise.

"I make trouble fo' some ob yo' white folks, see ef I don't," growled the coon.

Then, as the dude got up, the colored gentleman threw the last of the garment drapers over him, and said:

"Dere, sah, yo' seem to be doin' business in dis line."

"Oh, deah, take 'em off!" cried Green, getting terribly tangled up in the skirts.

Then out came the boss of the shop to see what all the crowd meant in front of his place.

He caught on to the country dude in one second.

"Trying to steal my property, are you?" he ejaculated.

At that he coupled on to that cheap dude's collar, and yanked him toward the store.

"No, sah, the howid things fell on me, sah, they weally did, you know."

"Too thin," and the boss calico seller yanked that skin off before he knew where he was.

"Not a bad snap, that," laughed Jack.

"No, sir," returned Jimmy. "It takes the tacks out of the rag carpet."

PART XXV.

THE dude whom the boss of the dry goods shop had pulled in, accusing him of trying to steal a lot of hoopskirts, finally established his innocence, but not before he had been pretty well frightened.

Those lively boys were well out of the way by this time, and playing off rackets on somebody else.

"That was a dandy one, wasn't it?" laughed Walter.

"First-class," said Harry, "but we won't have a chance to work it again, as his nibbs will take in his skeletons after this."

"Trust us for finding something to work up a racket on," chuckled Jim. "We don't get left very often, eh, Jack?"

"You can gamble your slippers we don't."

"In fact, I think I see a good chance now," said Jim in a whisper.

Just across the street from where they were now standing there was a paper-hanger at work.

That is, you could call him a paper-hanger if you wanted to be real high-toned, though most folks would say bill-poster.

Well, there he was, at any rate, putting up bills on a board fence for some big show that was coming to town.

"Where is it?" asked Jack.

"Over yonder," said Jim, indicating the sticker of bills.

The boys sauntered carelessly across the street without attracting any particular attention to themselves and stood behind the artist in paste.

He didn't hear them, and he would not have noticed them if he had, for he was used to having people gather around while he was at work.

Just at that moment he was putting up the bottom sheet of a poster whereon a girl in a blue jersey and red tights was depicted.

He gave it a slap with his brush to fix it in place, and then frescoed the next space on the fence previous to putting up something else.

Then he went into his canvas bag, got out some sheets and slapped one on the fence.

Just then Jimmy caught up his pail of paste and put it directly behind him.

Having finished the first part of his job, the artist stepped back to get more paste.

He thought the pail was alongside, but he discovered his error.

He struck the pail with his big foot and sent it kiting, upsetting the paste on the walk.

The next thing he did was to step in some of it and then sit down in the rest.

"Holy smoke!" he ejaculated.

"Stick a bill on him," cried Jack. "He's all ready for it."

"If he sits there too long he'll stick fast," added Jim.

"Sudden fall in paste."

"Great activity in bread stuffs."

"Get out of here, you young duffers!" cried the bil-

"What's the matter with you?" asked Jack, very innocently.

"You upset my paste, and I've a mind to paste you in the jaw for it."

"Oh, please don't," laughed Jack.

Jim, meanwhile, had skipped around behind the angry artist and had grabbed up a small bill representing a darky playing on a banjo.

With one good slap he pasted this on the back of the man's trousers, and then dodged back out of harm's way.

"Catch on to the walking bill board," cried Harry.

The man wheeled around and made a slap at Jim with his brush, but missed him.

"Stick yourself up against the fence," laughed Walter. "You have paste enough."

"I'll paste you all in the mugs," snapped the man, making a dash at them.

They did not wait for him to come up; however, but skipped away without further loss of time.

"Tra-la-la, old paste bucket."

"Good-bye, you boss paper-hanger."

"Skip the sewer, old bill slinger."

"Over the canal, you walking sign-board."

"I'll paralyze the lot of you if I catch you once," growled the man as he stopped to scoop up his paste and recover his bills.

Then he went on with his work, unconscious of the figure he cut with that highly colored poster sticking on behind.

Finally a benevolent old gentleman came up, took in the show and thought it was just a burning shame that the poor man shouldn't know what a guy he was.

"My dear friend," he said, tapping the man on the shoulder, "do you know that you have—"

That was as far as he went, for the bill-poster, thinking his tormentors had returned, wheeled suddenly around.

"Oh, you've come back to make more fun of me, have you?" he cried, as he brought the brush, full of paste, down on the top of the old gentleman's hat.

"Take that, you young vagabond!" he went on, without stopping to look; and the benevolent old soul got another crack.

It banged his hat down over his nose, and then Pastey gave him a rise behind with his boot that sent him flying for about ten feet.

Then and only then did he see the mistake he had made, and that he had assaulted a respectable old gentleman instead of a fun-loving boy.

"Great Jerusalem! I'll get sacked for that if they find me out!" he remarked, hastily.

Picking up his pail and bag, and tucking his brush under his arm, he whisked around the corner, and hurried off to paper another fence, being out of sight by the time the old gentleman had got out of his hat.

"Well, I never saw such an ungrateful pig in all my life," sputtered the old fellow. "I'll send in my resignation as president of the Society for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Working Classes immediately, and I'll do all I can to keep 'em down hereafter, bless me if I won't."

Meanwhile the boys, thinking that they had had fun enough for one afternoon, returned to the school, laughing heartily over the various rackets they had played.

Well, things went on pretty much the same way at Dr. Bircham's, the winter passed, spring came and was well on its way when something happened quite out of the common.

The boys had been enjoying themselves, but had lately let up on Winder, partly because they were tired of running the same fellow all the time, but more because he was beginning to tumble to the boys who played the most rackets on him.

Clarence had not escaped, by any means, either, and many were the jobs Jack and Jim put up on him, to relate a third of which would fill a book.

One day, however, Clarence received a letter from his cousin, Miss Nancy, the housekeeper for Mr. Grimes, inclosing another from that gentleman himself.

After perusing these epistles, the dude sought the two cousins, who were in their room reading, the weather being unpleasant.

"Aw, deah boys, I've news to tell you, don't ye know," said Clarence, as he entered and sat down.

"Has Winder stopped licking Tommy Wright?" asked Jack. "That would be news, indeed."

"Maybe you've given up trying to mash the girls in town?" added Jim.

"No, deah boy, this is weal news, don't ye know."

"Well, what is it?" asked both boys in a breath.

"I have a lettah heah—"

"Well, we can see that," said Jack, for Clarence had his letters in his hand.

"Fwom my cousin, the housekeepah at yew fathaw's," Clarence continued, looking at Jimmy.

"How is the deah old girl? She isn't married yet?"

"Oh, deah, no. You don't suppose any man in his senses would have haw, do you weally now?"

"Is she coming here to see you?"

"Wawse and wawse," cried Clarence. "She weahly wites to inclose a lettah of yaw fathaw's."

"Dad isn't coming up, is he?"

"My deah fellah, if you will only let me tell you without fawthaw intewuptions."

"Let him alone, Jim," said Jack.

"All right, drive ahead, Clarence."

"Yaw fathaw wites to say that he has found an opening faw me, and wants me come down to New Yawk diwectly."

"What sort of opening, down a coal hole? Is he going to drop you into it?"

"No, deah boy, but an opening in business, don't ye know."

"Oh," cried Jack and Jim.

"Yas, deah boys, and I stawt faw the metwopolls to-mowwow."

"You don't say!"

"What! Leave the school!"

"Yaw fathaw thinks I have progressed faw enough in my lectchaws to entah into the pwactical woutine of twade, deah boys."

"Well, well!"

"Great Scott!"

"And theahfaw I shall leave this gay and festive scene, don't ye know, as soon as I can get weady."

Here was news with a vengeance.

Clarence leave the academy!

Why, half their fun would be taken away from them after he had gone.

They might just as well leave themselves after that.

They could scarcely believe their ears.

"Aren't you giving us a wrong steer, Clarence, old chappie?"

"You don't mean to tell us honestly that you are going?"

"Yas, deah boys, it's twue enough. If you doubt my wawd, wead the lettah."

"No, we don't do that, of course, but it seems so sudden."

"I would just as soon have thought that the house was going to fall down."

However, the letter convinced them that Clarence was on the eve of departure, and they were all broken up over it.

"Well, it's a good chance," said Jimmy, "and it would never do to refuse such a good offer as that."

"It'll be a splendid thing," added Jack, "and you ought to take it, of course."

"Yas, I thought you would appwove of it, deah boys. I am sowy to go away, of course, but business is business, don't you know?"

"To be sure."

"And now I'll go and pack, deah boys, faw I take the fawst twain in the mawning."

"We'll help you," said both boys together.

"Aw, thanks awfully, deah boys."

In fact, the dear boys gave the tip to all their nearest chums, and the dude had a dozen assisting him.

All the boys were sorry to have Clarence leave, for they had had lots of fun with him, and even Tommy was saddened.

"Too bad, isn't it, Tom?" said Jimmy. "You won't have any twin now."

"It will be awfully lonesome to be the only donkey on the place, won't it?" added Jack.

Clarence went away early the next morning, and all the lively boys in the school went down to see him off.

They wept, they shook hands, they asked him for keepsakes, they shook hands with him, and, in fact, they made such a foul of him that he tumbled when he saw everybody on the train, laughing at him, and so he broke away, made his escape to the smoking-car, and got out of sight behind a big cigar.

The train moved off immediately afterward, the boys giving three rousing cheers for Clarence as it steamed away.

Then they returned to the school in a body, and made things lively all the way back from the station.

Things went pretty slow for Jack and Jim for the next two days, and they hardly knew what to do with themselves.

The next day, however, Winder had a circus with that pet tooth of his, and things were as lively as when a cyclone strikes a Western ranch.

The pain was just a regular rip snorter, and Winder tried all sorts of things to keep it in subjection.

He tried walloping the boys first, as a counter irritant, but that didn't seem to work for a cent.

Then he got a big bottle of medicine and put it in his desk, taking frequent doses from it during the afternoon.

It was all very well to call it medicine, but it was whisky for all that.

Winder's breath gave him away after awhile, and then the boys were delighted.

"I'd give anything to see him get tight," whispered Jack to Jim. "so that we could have fun with him."

"Wait, my boy, and possess your soul in patience," warbled Jim, in a sweet pianissimo voice.

When school was over for the day Winder was pretty well corned with the whisky he had taken, and although he was perfectly quiet and orderly, and altogether the gentleman, he was nevertheless decidedly under the influence of the spirit of the vine.

He disappeared immediately after school was dismissed, and went to his room to fill up so as to forget his pain.

He emptied his bottle of "medicine" in the course of the afternoon, and in the evening bit a sizeable hole out of another.

He was at the dinner-table as usual, but his breath was enough to make a horse drunk.

"If Winder keeps on we'll have all the fun we want to-night," said Jimmy, as he and Jack were leaving the dining-room.

He did keep it up, sure enough, for he was bound to kill that pain if he consumed a gallon of the doctor's best.

Finally the spirits proved too much for both pain and professor, and both succumbed to their influence.

It was somewhere about the witching hour of eleven or twelve o'clock, when two white figures stole softly into the professor's room.

There was no necessity for any stealthy business, however.

If a regiment had marched through the room, Winder would not have heard them.

He was too dead asleep for that.

The two figures, it is needless to say, were Jack and Jim.

"Is he sound asleep?" asked Jack.

Jim pinched the sleeper's nose to ascertain whether he was or not.

Only a grunt was the response.

Then he kicked him right in the part where he usually sat down.

Winder did not seem to mind it any more than if he had been made of wood.

"The stuff he took was too much for him," laughed Jack.

"Yes, he won't be likely to trouble us."

"Then let's get to work."

Now, while those boys might be called shavers without much impropriety, no one would have supposed them to be barbers.

Nevertheless, they now got out shears, razors, combs, and towels, and went to work on Winder's head.

The gas was turned up so that they could see, and then they proceeded to business.

First they cut the hair right down to the bone on one side of the sleeping professor's head.

"How is that?" laughed Jack.

"First-rate."

"Suppose we leave it so?"

"No, let's fix the other side."

So they went to work on the other side and mowed all the hair off down to the ground.

Winder did not mind it any more than if he had been dead.

They turned him over, they rubbed his head with coarse brushes, they pulled what little hair he had left, and he scarcely winced.

The jig juice he had taken had so stupefied him that nothing would awake him till its influence had passed off.

The boys were having lots of fun with him, but still they were not happy.

"Let's give him a clean shave," cried Jimmy.

"All right, my covey."

Then they tucked a towel around the professor's neck and lathered his head an inch thick.

They weren't much at handling razors, having had no experience in that line, but they got on very nicely for amateurs.

They went slow and easy, and got over the ground very creditably.

It took them some little time to complete the job, but when it was done it was a daisy.

There wasn't a spark of hair left on Winder's head from his forehead to the back of his head.

The razors had done their work up to the queen's taste.

You could see your face in that bald pate now, it shone so.

If a fly had lighted on it otherwise than squarely, he would have slipped up and broken his neck to a dead certainty.

But there were no flies on that head, both literally and figuratively, as regarded the neatness and dexterity of its cropping.

"Ain't he a darling?" snickered Jack.

"Sweet enough to be cuffed."

Then the boys gathered up their towels, mugs, soap, razors and other apparatus of the amateur barber-shop.

The hair had been caught on a towel as it fell, and now it was thrown into the fire and burned.

Having cleaned up everything, the two shavers turned down the gas and lighted out.

"There'll be a sweet old picnic in the morning," laughed Jimmy.

"We'll have to get out a patent on this racket and label it. 'Copyright secured,' so that we can get the credit of it."

"That's just what we don't want, my boy, for if we are discovered we are found out."

"And then we get a first-class heeling and soleing with a trunk strap."

"Or maybe the G. B., but then there isn't any danger of our being found out."

"Not a bit, my boy."

The boys got back to their room without any one being the wiser, and were soon fast asleep.

The next morning they awoke as usual, in spite of the short amount of sleep they had had.

Then they sailed down to the dining-room and took their places with the rest.

They were all there, boys, teachers, the doctor and all.

Mrs. Guff was at the head of the table, the doctor was in his usual seat, and all the boys, looking as neat as pins, were ready to sit down when the doctor tapped his little bell.

Still there was one vacant chair.

The adored professor, Winder the beloved, was not at his post.

He was rarely known to miss his grub, and it was always a matter of surprise when he was absent from the table.

The doctor said grace, and then the business of the moment proceeded.

"Where is Professor Winder?" he asked, looking around.

Nobody seemed to know.

"He was sick yesterday," volunteered Mr. Root.

"He may want his breakfast sent up," added Hodson.

"It's very strange," said the doctor.

However, the breakfast went on just the same, and really the boys had better appetites because Winder was not around.

When the meal was on its last lap toward a successful conclusion a great racket was heard.

Suddenly the dining-room door was thrown violently open and in danced Winder as mad as a nestful of hornets.

He was dressed and in his right mind, but that was not all.

He was as bald as a baby and his head shone like a miniature sun.

"I'll find out the perpetrator of this outrage or die in the attempt!" he bawled.

Then he struck the table a whack that made all the plates jump.

"Fire!" screamed Guff.

"Ha-ha, he-he, ho-ho, hi-hi!" yelled the boys.

Winder's bald head was too much for their risibles. Even the doctor was forced to smile.

"You have forgotten your wig, professor," he remarked.

"Wig!" yelled Winder, striding up to the doctor and slapping one hand in the other. "I never wore one!"

"Then you ought to," said the doctor, mildly. "Baldness is not becoming."

"I shouldn't say it was," howled the enraged pedagogue, striking his dexter forefinger on the palm of his left hand.

At this all the boys giggled.

"I've had enough of this sort of business, Dr. Bircham," howled Winder, beating time with his long, lean, lank finger, and getting as red as a beet. "I've stood all I'm going to stand, and if the perpetrator of this latest outrage isn't caught and punished I will leave this establishment and denounce it as a place unfit for any gentleman to be associated with—so there!"

Things were beginning to look decidedly squally.

PART XXVI.

"My dear professor," interposed Dr. Bircham, as Winder began working himself up to fever heat.

"Don't dear me, sir," sputtered Winder, "for I won't have it."

Then his head got as red as the sun in a mist from excitement.

"But if you'll allow me—"

"No, sir. I've had altogether too much allowances."

"Then if you will only explain—"

"Good Lord!" shrieked Winder, dancing up and down like a barefooted boy on a hot pavement, "what more explanation do you want? Do you see my head?"

Yes, the doctor did see it, not being blind.

In fact, they all saw it, and a general titter was the result.

"It wasn't so last night when I went to bed."

"Better let it out for advertising purposes," said Root.

"Or a skating rink," added Hodson.

Then all the boys laughed again.

Only two of them knew the secret of Winder's bald head, but they all enjoyed it, just the same.

"Do you hear that?" cried Winder, banging the table again with his fist. "I shall be the laughing stock of the whole school."

"Gentlemen, I must beg you not to indulge in any irrelevant remarks," said the doctor, quietly but firmly. "Boys, you can go to your class-rooms."

The boys, thus dismissed, arose and left the room, though every one of them gave one last, lingering look as he went out at that shiny bald pate and snickered.

"Now," said the doctor, when the boys were out and the door was shut, "what is the matter?"

"Great Jehosaphat, doctor, can't you see for yourself? I'm as bald as if I had been scalped."

"Well?"

"It's another practical joke that these imps have played on me."

"How do you make that out?"

"Why, they have shaved my head while I was asleep."

"And you never awakened?" said the doctor, somewhat incredulously.

"Well, you see, I had neuralgia yesterday, and last night I took a great deal of medicine to relieve the pain."

"He got as full as a goat, I guess," whispered Root to Hodson.

"As inebriated as a boiled owl," added the teacher of languages, who, by reason of his profession was well versed in slang.

"And consequently I slept very heavily," continued Winder.

"And then somebody shaved your head?"

"Yes, sir, and if they are not detected and punished I will leave the school."

"There have been altogether too many practical jokes played in the school this year," said the doctor, "and this goes beyond anything I have seen."

"It's certainly the best yet," said Root.

"It cleans out the bakery," remarked Hodson.

"It goes beyond a joke," snapped Winder, "and if the perpetrator isn't—"

"Whom do you suspect, if any one?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, it's some of those confounded boys. There's a dozen of 'em in the school, any one of whom would do it if they had a good chance."

"Who are they?"

"Grimes, Dodson, Gilbert, Davenport, Power, Sinclair, Dunn, Raynor, Edwards, Williamson, Sutton, Crandall and lots more besides."

"You've given the names of the very best boys in the school, and the ones I never have trouble with."

"If it wasn't one of them I'll eat my shirt!"

"Better eat your breakfast first," said the doctor. "You will probably find it more digestible."

"I don't want any breakfast, I want revenge."

"Better get a wig first," laughed Root.

"Bah!" said Winder, and then he flounced out of the room like a man in a fit.

When the doctor went into his room the boys were all studying away for dear life.

"Who knows anything about this last outrage?" he asked.

Nobody did, of course.

"Do you, Gilbert?"

"No, sir."

"Do you, Davenport?"

"No, sir."

"Do you, Wright?"

"No, sir—but I could guess," said Tommy, with a chuckle.

"What could you guess?"

"Nothin'," said Tommy, quickly, realizing that he said too much.

"Guessing is not evidence," said the doctor, sternly. "Do you know?"

"No, sir."

"That is sufficient."

Then the doctor started in with his catechism once more, questioning just the very boys who knew nothing at all about the racket.

"Unless the boys most interested in this matter confess of their own accord," said the doctor at length, "I shall question all of you, and then if I learn nothing I shall conclude that somebody has lied, and punish the whole school in order to reach the offenders."

Most of the boys groaned, for, although they would have declined to tell who the culprits were if they knew, they did not altogether like the idea of getting punished for another's fault.

They were all down on Winder, and glad that he had been served as he had, but they weren't anxious for a licking for all that.

"He won't punish the whole school," whispered Jimmy. "He ain't the sort of a fellow to do that."

"I don't know about it. He don't want to lose Winder, I guess."

The doctor now dismissed the boys that were due in the other rooms, among them being Jack and Jim. He questioned the rest, but no one knew anything about the racket.

The cousins had not told any one as yet, though they meant to, so as to have more fun over the affair. Suddenly Winder came flying into the doctor's room and threw down a couple of articles on the desk.

"Will you please tell me what those things are?" demanded the professor, very much excited.

"A handkerchief and a towel."

"Exactly."

"Well, why do you bring them to me?"

"Please examine them closely, doctor, and then I will explain further."

The doctor examined.

"Ah!" he presently explained.

The name of James Grimes, Jr., was marked in one corner of the handkerchief.

That of John Dodson was upon the towel.

"Do you guess the ownership of those articles?" snapped Winder.

"I do."

"Well, then, the persons that own those articles shaved my head last night."

Winder, by the way, now wore a skull cap which served to cover a part of his baldness.

"How do you know?" asked the doctor.

"How do I know?" snarled Winder.

"Yes."

"I found those things in my room."

"Well, what does that prove?"

"That they are the villains."

"Not at all. It is only circumstantial evidence."

"Men have been hanged by that before now," growled the professor, "and I'll bet ten dollars that they were the ones."

"Could not somebody else have taken them and left them in the room?"

"Yes; but they didn't. Grimes and Dodson are the ones, and they must be flogged and expelled or I will leave the school."

"You don't know that they are the ones," said the doctor, mildly.

"I don't!" almost yelled Winder, prancing up and down like a raging jackass. "Do you think I am a fool?"

"I am not on my oath," said the doctor, dryly, "and so I suppose I can say no."

"What more evidence do you want?" asked Winder.

"That you are a fool," asked the doctor.

"No, of course not. That those two young scoundrels are guilty—I'd have 'em horsewhipped before the whole school and then expel 'em. They ought to be hanged, the young ruffians."

"Mr. Winder you forget yourself," said the doctor.

"You had better go to your class-room and resume your lessons."

"I won't stir a peg till I find out who shaved my head," screamed Winder.

Just then some of the boys returned, those who had been in Root's room.

Jack and Jim were among the number, and as they sat down Winder blurted out:

"Grimes and Dodson were you in my room after I had gone to bed last night?"

"I decline to answer," said Jim.

"I have nothing to say," replied Jack.

"Is this your handkerchief?" asked the doctor of Jimmy.

"Yes, sir," said Jim, as he took the wipe and put it in his pocket.

"Is this your towel, Master Dodson?"

"Yes, sir," said Jack, taking it from the doctor.

Both boys knew that for once they had made a mess of it, and that they were caught.

How did they ever come to leave those things behind?

There was no telling.

They knew they were collared, but they wouldn't give Winder the satisfaction of owning up before him.

"I told you they were guilty!" yelled Winder. "Make them apologize—flog 'em, and then expel 'em before the whole school."

"Aren't you rather too sanguinary?" said the doctor.

"No, sir. They did it, and they must suffer for it. I know they did it, the young reprobates!"

"Young gentlemen, you hear what the professor says?" said Dr. Bircham.

"Yes, sir."

"Is what he says the truth?"

"He don't say what we did, sir," said Jack.

"How do we know what he means?" asked Jimmy, quietly.

"Didn't you go into my room last night and shave my head?" asked Winder, getting redder than ever.

"I have already answered."

"Same here."

"Did you do so?" asked the doctor, in a quiet tone.

"I have nothing to say at present," returned both boys together.

"That shows that they are guilty," snarled Winder. Just then Mr. Hodson came in and said:

"Professor Winder, I cannot hear any more of your classes, as I have my own to look after."

"Go on with your classes, professor," said the doctor to Winder, in a tone that admitted of no reply.

Winder snarled and left the room, mad enough to eat his own head off at not being able to make the boys confess.

When he was out of hearing the doctor said:

"Are you ready to answer now, young gentlemen?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy. "I did all that he says."

"With my assistance," added Jack.

"Why did you not say so before?"

"Would you want a man like that to crow over you, sir?" asked Jimmy, by way of reply.

"I wouldn't give him the satisfaction of hearing us own up," said Jack.

"I'm afraid you do him an injustice."

"He does us one and every boy in the school. He isn't fit to teach anybody but a lot of hoodlums."

"Sh!" said the doctor, though he secretly admitted the truth of Jimmy's description.

"If he had been like you, sir," said Jack, "he would never have had a single joke played upon him."

The doctor thought a few minutes, and then said:

"You will apologize to him?"

"No, sir."

Jack and Jim spoke at once, and there was no doubt expressed in the tones of their voices.

"You will not? Why?"

"If he had not been so savage I might have done so," said Jim, "but now I will not."

"I wouldn't apologize if I died for not doing it," said Jack.

"What am I to do then?" asked the doctor. "I cannot disgrace you by expelling you, and yet I cannot keep you in the school if you will not make some reparation."

"Do as you think best, sir," the boys said.

"No, it must be as you say."

"Then may I speak to Jack a minute?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes."

"I say, old fellow," whispered Jim, "what do you say? Hadn't we better git?"

"Yes, for I won't apologize to that old camel."

"And I say, Jack, it's no fun here any more, without Clarence."

"Not a bit, and I'd sooner go than stay."

"So would I, a good sight."

"Then let's tell the doc so."

"All right."

Then Jimmy stood up and said respectfully:

"Sir, we have concluded to compromise the matter and leave the academy of our own accord. Apologize to Mr. Winder, we never will, nor do we like to give you the pain of expelling us, and so we will go of our own volition."

That was a rather neat way of putting it, and the doctor was forced to smile in spite of himself.

"Is that your decision also, Dodson?" he asked of Jack.

"Yes, sir; it's Jim and Jack or Jack and Jim in everything we do."

"You have well considered the matter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. When do you propose to start?"

"By the next train, if we can catch it. May Smoke carry our trunks to the station?"

"Certainly."

"Then we would like to go and pack at once."

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"See you later, boys," said Jimmy, as he left the room.

"Tra-la, old pards," said Jack.

Then they went up to their rooms to pack their belongings in their trunks, and get them ready for Smoke to take to the eleven o'clock train bound to the city.

"This is a lark, ain't it?" laughed Jack.

"First class, old chap, but I wouldn't say I was sorry to Winder, not for all the world."

"No, nor I, if they fenced it in."

All this time they were industriously changing their clothes and packing up, for they had no time to lose.

When Winder got a rest in his work he hurried off to the main school room.

The boys were not there, though he knew they ought to be, and he said to the doctor:

"Did they confess?"

"The matter is settled," answered the doctor.

He, too, felt no desire to grant the surly professor the satisfaction he wanted.

"They will apologize, I suppose?"

"No."

"But they will be expelled?"

"No."
 "What! Neither apology nor expulsion?" shrieked the baffled professor. "This is infamous! You said the affair was all settled."
 "So it is."
 "But why then are they not—?"
 "They are going away at once."
 "Aha! You expelled them, then?"
 "No, they go because they wish it."
 "But they confessed!" snapped Winder.
 "I am not at liberty to repeat any of the conversation," returned the doctor icily.
 "H'm!" muttered Winder, as he left the room. "They're going, are they? Well, there ain't much satisfaction in that, seeing that they didn't confess nor apologize, and weren't cowhided, and are going on their own account. The doctor may think that's all very fine, but I'll be hanged if I can."
 Then he returned to his own room and sat waiting for one of his classes to come in.
 Presently he heard a wagon drive out of the yard, and then a shout from a lot of boys:
 "Good-bye, Jack; good-bye, Jim!"
 "Hurrah for Jack and Jim!"
 "Good luck to you, boys. Don't forget to write to us."
 "Good-bye, Harry; good-bye, Walt. Good-bye all hands!"
 "What in thunder is the meaning of all this?" muttered the professor.
 Then he went to a window, threw it up and stuck out his head.
 The wind took off his skull cap, and his beautiful shaven head was revealed in all its classic elegance. Jack and Jim, their grips in their hands, were just going down the main walk.
 On the stoop stood the doctor and his assistants, waving their hands and wishing the boys God speed,

On the stoop, at the windows, and in the paths, were gathered all the boys, wishing good-bye to their late companions.
 Mrs. Guff, the cook, the housemaid, the butler and all the servants, were gathered in a knot by themselves, and they too were bidding farewell to the two jolly boys.
 Everybody seemed sorry to have them go, everybody gave them good wishes.
 "Bah!" muttered Winder, "they're all a pack of fools. If I'd had my way those two young scoundrels wouldn't be going off in this triumphal fashion."
 Suddenly the attention of the boys was attracted to Winder.
 "Get on to old Baldy!"
 "The ball is up. Let's go skating!"
 "Cover the block!"
 "Three shots for five cents! Whoever hits it three times running gets a dollar!"
 "Hurrah for Jim and Jack!"
 Our boys turned at the sound and immediately saw the professor.
 He occupied a prominent position, and nobody could help seeing him.
 "Skip the gutter, old Knock-'em-stiff!" laughed Jimmy. "I live by the river. Drop in some night."
 "Good-bye, old Wind-'em-up. I'll call on you at the jail," cried Jack.
 "Hurrah for Jack and Jim!" yelled the boys.
 Winder stuck his head as far out of the window as he could get it, shook his fist at the two boys, and snarled:
 "Bad luck go with you, confound your skins, you young hounds! You'll come to the gallows yet, and I'd walk ten miles willingly to see you hanged!"
 "Go buy a wig!" cried Jim.
 "Good-bye, you old darling!" said Jack. "Send

me an invitation to your funeral, and I'll bring some fireworks."
 "No need, for he'll have enough of them where he's going!" cried Gilbert.
 "I'd like to see you both hanged!" snapped Winder, shaking his fist.
 "Very likely. Tra-la-la, old fire-and-brimstone."
 Then the boys got into the wagon with Smoke between them, and away they went.
 The last thing they saw was that window suddenly coming down and catching Winder on the back of the neck, and they laughed till they reached the station.
 Tommy had worked that little racket, having stolen into the room where Winder was, banging the window down suddenly and then escaping.
 Jack and Jim reached home late that night, not very much to the surprise of Mr. Grimes, for Clarence had told him all about their many rackets and scrapes at school.
 "We were lonesome without poor dear Clarence, don't ye know," said Jimmy, and Mr. Grimes very wisely asked no questions.
 Of the other boys at Dr. Bircham's we have nothing particular to say, except that they sadly missed Jack and Jim and were glad when the long vacation arrived.
 Very few of the old set returned in the fall, and Winder made it hot for those who took their places.
 Smoke and Mrs. Guff kept their places in the household, and Dr. Bircham continued to be the same quiet, kindly gentleman as of old, respected and beloved by all with whom he came in contact.
 This, then, is all we have to say concerning Jack and Jim, or at least for the present.
 Whether our readers will ever hear of them again is one of those things that no fellow finds out till it happens.

[THE END.]

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